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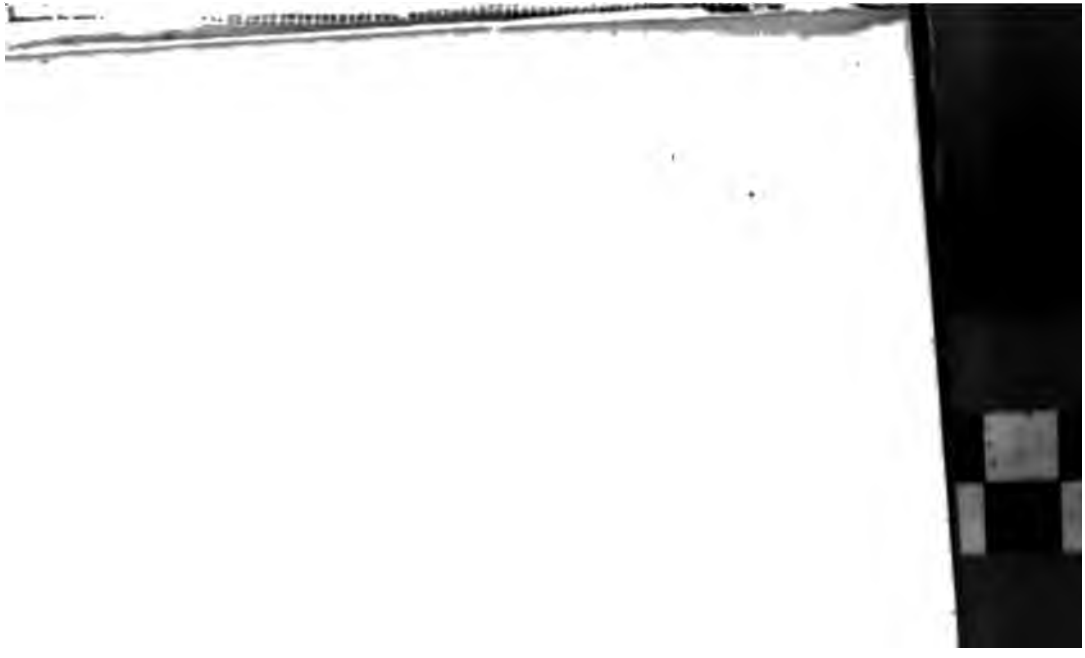

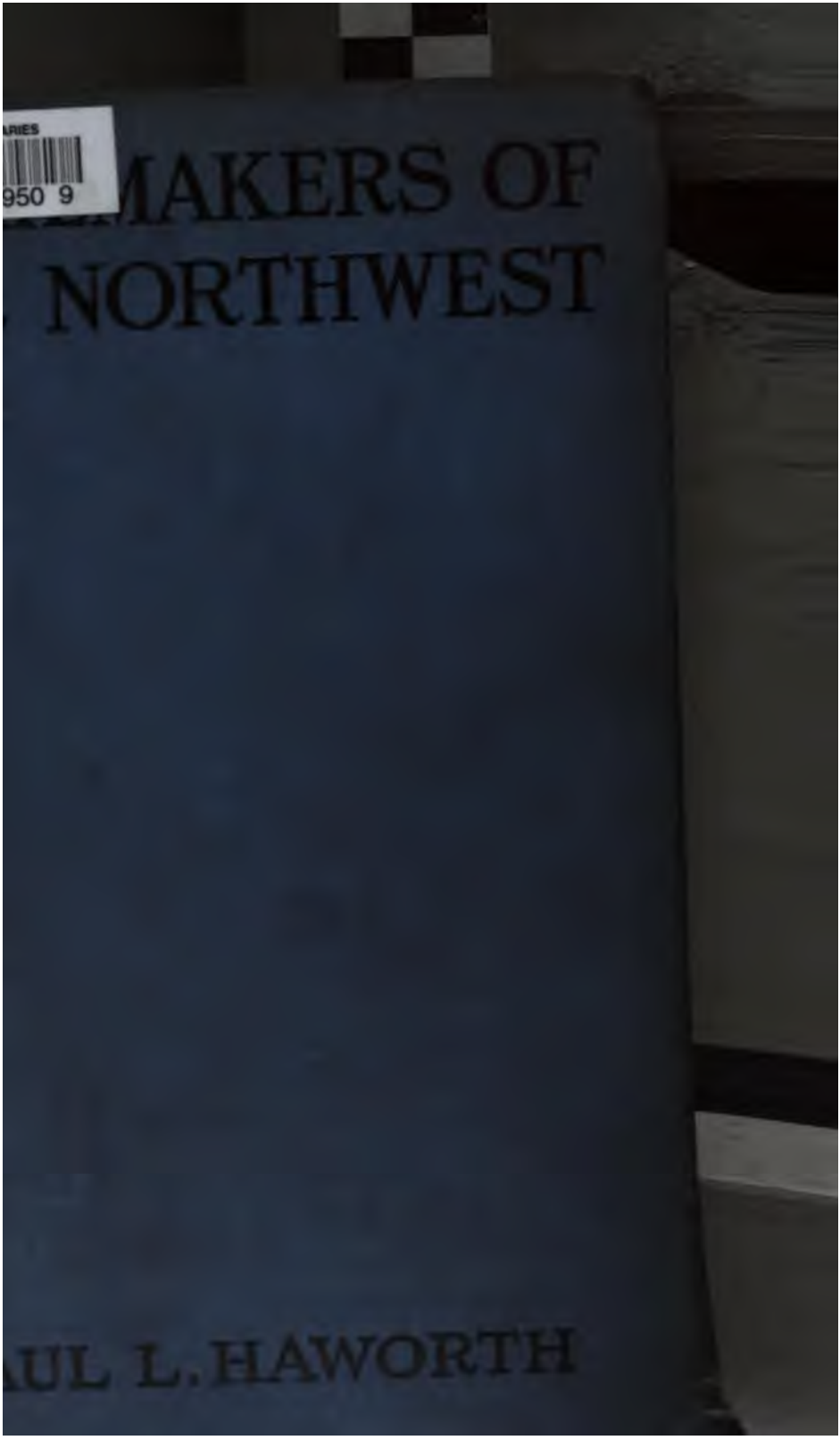
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From photograph by the Author

Falls discovered by the Author near Mt. Lloyd George

TRAILMAKERS OF THE NORTHWEST

BY

PAUL LELAND HAWORTH

AUTHOR OF "ON THE HEADWATERS OF PEACE RIVER," "GEORGE WASHINGTON: FARMER," "THE UNITED STATES IN OUR OWN TIMES, 1865-1920," ETC.

FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

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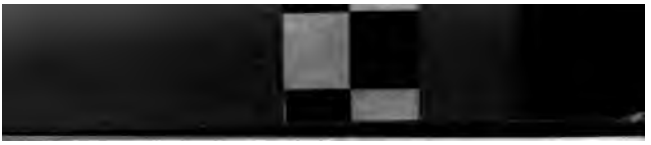
PREFACE

THE story of the exploration of the American Northwest is one of the most picturesque and romantic in human annals. Adventurous men, pushing into the unknown at the hazard of their lives, discovered wilderness oceans whose waters seemed to mingle with the sky, followed the winding courses of mighty rivers for thousands of miles, found their way through mountain labyrinths where craggy peaks lifted high their ice-clad summits, hunted strange and dangerous wild beasts, traded and fought with tribes of treacherous, red-skinned aborigines who might be friends to-day and deadly enemies to-morrow, and finally, after centuries of effort, stood upon the shores of the vast Pacific and gazed westward over its heaving waters toward the old "Cathay."

For many years I have been an eager reader of the literature of the subject, and repeatedly I have myself made expeditions to the dwindling regions that yet remain unexplored. The present book is the outcome of this reading and of these first-hand experiences. It does not purport to be exhaustive. It is rather an impressionistic picture of a great epic movement, and, frankly, it is a book for boys—young and old.

In an appendix the reader will find a list of books, some of which, I hope, he will take the trouble to consult. By so doing he can become the partner of many an interesting adventurer and can enjoy by proxy unlimited thrilling experiences. That these books—I name only



the very best—are not more widely read is a vast pity, and is due to the fact that the great general public is unaware of their existence, or at least of their possibilities for pleasure unalloyed.

PAUL L. HAWORTH.

Eastover
West Newton, Indiana
January, 1921

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TRAILMAKERS OF THE NORTHWEST

CHAPTER I

THE BEAVER AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS AND HOW THE DEMAND FOR HIS FUR LED TO GREAT DISCOVERIES

THE exploration of a large part of what is now Canada and the United States was due to the presence of the little animal we call the beaver.

Spanish explorers in America sought gold and silver and precious stones, and found them. Cortez and Pizarro and their mail-clad followers, riding strange animals and armed with steel swords and lances and with guns and cannon that spoke with the voice of thunder and sent invisible death from afar, conquered Mexico and Peru and obtained vast booty. For generations thereafter the mines and fisheries of Spanish America sent yearly to the homeland tall galleons filled with bars of silver and gold and frails of magnificent pearls, and Spain was envied by all other European nations for her New World treasure house. And in the days of Good Queen Bess British sea captains like Drake and Grenville lay in wait for the tall galleons and took and plundered them, for in those days even pious Englishmen deemed it no sin to spoil Spaniards and Papists.

French, British, and Dutch explorers in North America also sought eagerly for precious metals, but in vain. Now and then some optimistic navigator sailed home with a

shipload of earth filled with specks of glittering mica, which he fondly believed to be gold, but two centuries and a half elapsed after Columbus's first landfall before either gold or silver was found in considerable quantities in the region north of that held by the Spaniards.

Nevertheless, settlers finally established themselves along the Atlantic seaboard and wrung a livelihood from the soil and from fisheries. Furthermore, the land was rich in fur-bearing animals whose furs were light and easily transported and were in demand in Europe, and the fur trade, in a measure, made up for the failure to find precious metals.

The skins of otters, bears, mink, martens, lynxes, and other animals were eagerly sought, but the main staple of all the fur trade was the beaver skin. It surpassed in importance all others combined, and, as we shall explain in detail later, became the unit of value over half the continent.

The beaver, as most people are aware, is a small animal, averaging thirty or forty pounds weight, but occasionally reaching sixty or seventy. It has exceedingly powerful chisel-shaped front teeth, webbed hind feet, a flat scaly tail, and is covered with a short, dense, and silky fur that is overgrown with long coarse hairs. For centuries this fur was greatly prized for the making of hats.

In the early days the habitat of the beaver extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Gulf to Hudson Bay and the Arctic. Wherever within these limits conditions were favorable the beaver was likely to be found.

Water he must have, not only to drink but as protection against wolves and other enemies. Trees or brushwood

must be present, for the beaver lives almost wholly upon bark and twigs, though at times he eats berries and the roots of such water plants as lilies and spatterdocks.

Some beavers are content merely to live in burrows dug in the banks of rivers or streams. These are sometimes called "bank beavers," and I have had trappers tell me that they form a separate species, but this is not the case. Much more interesting are those that build dams and live in hutches or lodges built in the ponds thus formed.

The dams vary in length from a few feet to a quarter or half a mile. The main object of these dams is to keep the water at a certain level. The ponds themselves vary greatly in size; I have seen them hardly more than puddles a few yards across, and I remember one in northern British Columbia that covers several hundred acres. The small dams are likely to be the work of a single family; in the building of the longer ones several families coöperate.

Most dams are built of branches and small logs, chinked with mud, but beavers will also use stones or whatever material happens to be handy. It was long popularly believed that in building them the beaver made use of his flat tail as a trowel, but this is a myth long since exploded. The beaver carries the mud clasped between his short forepaws and his breast, and does not use his tail in the building process at all. He seems, however, to use his tail to a certain extent in swimming and when alarmed he will slap the top of the water with it, making a report that can be heard a long distance. More than once in the far Northland I have been awakened by beavers that in swimming past our camp would get the dreaded man-scent and would then slap their tails on the water.

In selecting a site for his dam the beaver displays much intelligence. He chooses a place where the water will form a pond close to which there will be plenty of saplings and trees of the varieties that make good food, such, for example, as birch, poplar, alder, etc.; as a rule a beaver eats the bark and twigs of deciduous trees only and does not care for evergreens like pine, cedar, or spruce. He selects a narrow spot in the stream, so that his dam will be as short as possible; and he takes every advantage of fallen trees, rocks, or other objects that will help to anchor the structure.

On small streams that do not have much current or that are not subject to big floods a single dam is usually considered sufficient by the flat-tailed engineers. On more powerful streams they sometimes employ a plan so ingenious that it seems incredible that an animal could have the intelligence to have evolved it. Below the main dam they will construct another dam, which backs up the water against the main dam and helps to support it against the pressure from above. They have even been known to build a third dam in order to give support for the second.

Once the dam is built the beavers keep close watch upon it. A spillway, or perhaps several, has been provided, over which the surplus water can run; in case one of these ways is cut too deep by the current, the animals soon repair the damage done, for it is a prime object to keep the water always at the same level. If the injury is slight, one beaver may make all the repairs; if a considerable gap has been cut, as by a flood, all will pitch in and with sticks and earth will fill up the break.

Trappers take advantage of this habit of beavers with fatal effect. They will cut a breach in the dam and then

round it will set their traps, knowing that when darkness comes the industrious animals will be almost certain to set to work making repairs and will thus put their feet in the traps.

Having completed their dam, the beavers are likely to begin building their hutch or house. This is usually made of sticks and mud, with the foundation deep enough in water so that a passageway will be left under the ice even in the coldest winter, while the conical top rises well above the surface. Late in the fall the beavers are likely to give their house an extra coating of mud. This soon freezes and forms a covering that is impenetrable by wolves, wolverines, or any of the beaver's other enemies except man.

The hutches vary in size from heaps of mud and sticks six or eight feet across and three or four feet high to structures several times as large. The largest I ever happened to have seen lies near the Quadacha River in a remote part of northern British Columbia. As it was a considerable distance out in a large pond, I was unable to get near enough to measure it, but it was certainly upwards of thirty feet across at the base and nine or ten feet high.

These big houses are usually inhabited by two or more families; the smaller houses by only one. Where two or more families occupy a hutch there will, of course, be more than one room within, which may or may not be connected; and it is possible that it is this circumstance that first gave rise to fanciful stories that beavers have several rooms appropriated to different uses, such as eating, sleeping, and storing provisions. All close observers of the beaver declare that this is not the case. Upon this subject Samuel Hearne, whose adventurous experiences

From a flashlight photograph by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

Beaver on the top of his lodge

will be described in detail a little later, says: "It frequently happens that some of the larger houses are found to have one or more partitions, if they deserve that appellation; but that is no more than a part of the main building, left by the sagacity of the beaver to support the roof. On such occasions, it is common for those different apartments, as some are pleased to call them, to have no communication with each other but by water; so that in fact they may be called double or treble houses, rather than different apartments of the same house. I have seen a large beaver house built in a small island that had near a dozen apartments under one roof; and, two or three of these excepted, none of them had any communication with each other but by water. As there were beavers enough to inhabit each apartment it is more than probable that each family knew its own, and always entered at their own door."

As a rule, each apartment, whether there be one or several in a house, has at least two entrances. Doubtless this is partly because the beavers wish to be sure of an avenue of escape in case one entrance should be blocked by an enemy.

The size of the interior chambers varies greatly. Some are no more than three or four feet in diameter and two feet high. Exceptional ones have been found that were a dozen or even twenty feet across. Ten years ago when on a hunting trip in Alberta in the wilderness of mountains that lies around the headwaters of the Athabasca and Saskatchewan rivers my Cree Indian guide, Jimmy Paul, told me a strange story of such a big beaver apartment. Poor Jimmy! we ran into wretched weather on the trip, with a great deal of rain and snow, and he suffered so much that he died two days after his return. His story

From a flashlight photograph by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

Beaver on the top of his lodge

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was that once when a small lad he was traveling with his parents and brothers and sisters in the foothills and they were overtaken by one of the great forest fires that so often devastate the region. Escape by flight was impossible, but fortunately close by there was a small beaver pond in which stood an enormous hutch that the father and other Indian hunters had broken into that spring. The father put his squaw and the children into this house and covered the opening with a wet blanket, while he himself stood in the water outside, with another wet blanket over his head. The fire came roaring through the woods like a tornado. A she-bear and two cubs, several deer, and a bull moose also took refuge in the pond. The flames leapt right over the water and caught in the trees beyond. The father was half stifled with heat and smoke, but by frequently ducking his head he kept the blanket around it wet, while he threw water on the one he had put over the opening in the lodge. Despite these efforts, both blankets were badly singed, but the lives of all the Indians, big and little, were saved. Most of the deer were killed, and the moose and the bears were badly burned about the heads, but, when the fire finally passed, they were able to walk away.

In building dams and in gathering food beavers cut trees ranging from mere saplings up to those that are two or, occasionally, even three feet in diameter. The rapidity with which with their powerful teeth they will fell a tree is astonishing. Not infrequently the cutting looks as if it had been done with an axe, though closer inspection will show the marks of the broad teeth. When once a tree is down, the beavers cut off the limbs and cut the trunk itself into convenient lengths, though they do not do this with trunks too large to be moved.

The chief food of the beaver is bark, not the outside shell but the cambium layer, which is more nutritious. They also eat some of the wood beneath the bark but probably get little food value from it. In spring, summer, and fall they eat their meals wherever it happens to be convenient, but for winter use they sink in the water near their lodge a heap of limbs and poles.

It is in the transportation of this store of food that the beaver displays perhaps his greatest intelligence. If trees or saplings of the right variety stand at the edge of his pond, he can, of course, cut them down and then do almost all the work of transportation by water. Sometimes a tree, when cut, falls right into the pond, in which case the job is easy. But not infrequently it happens that the beavers exhaust the supply of trees close to the water and must go considerable distances for their food. One traveling in beaver country will often see the roads along which the beavers have dragged the limbs, and it is noticeable that the animals have been careful to clear away the obstacles that might impede the transportation work.

Where circumstances are favorable beavers have been known—incredible as it may seem—to dig canals from their pond to the trees they intend to cut. These canals are usually two or three feet wide and deep enough to float a limb or small log. To supply water for the canals the flat-tailed engineers will tap springs or brooks and divert the water into their waterway. In case the ground slopes up they will even construct a dam and then continue the work at a higher level. Sometimes several such dams or locks are used. Down these canals the beavers float the limbs and logs, pulling them over the dams.

The beaver displays so much skill as an engineer that

many naturalists consider him the most intelligent of all animals. And yet he is not all-wise even in doing the kinds of work that I have described. I recall that near one of my camps in the far Northwest I noticed two striking instances of the beaver's limitations. The animals had been felling trees that stood on the bank of a river that flowed close by. They wished, of course, the trees to fall into the water, and had they understood the art of "throwing" trees, by making most of the cut on the side nearest the water, they could have felled almost all the trees in that direction. But as often as not the main cut was on the landward side, with the result that the tree had fallen right away from the water. In many instances, in fact, the animals had gnawed in about the same depth from all sides, and in such cases the tree would fall according to the way it leaned or according to the way the wind was blowing. In one instance the animals (or one animal) had attempted to cut a small poplar that grew between three spruce. A glance would have convinced a human being that the tops of the trees were so interlaced that the poplar could not fall. Nevertheless the beavers had set to work and cut the poplar completely off. Then, when the tree did not fall, they had cut it down again, but had finally given up the undertaking as a bad job after doing a lot of useless gnawing about the butt.

The effect of the work of beavers upon the contour and shape of the land was important far beyond what is generally understood. There is hardly a stream in North America, north of Mexico, along which they did not live and labor, in many cases for countless generations. Their dams formed reservoirs which caught leaves and dead trees and débris of all kinds. These things in course of

time would decompose and would form a deep vegetable muck. Thus during the ages a land-forming process was going on. Ultimately the ponds would be transformed into swamps and these in turn into meadows, over which great forests might ultimately grow. In fact, millions upon millions of the richest bottom lands in the United States and Canada owe their existence to the labors of endless generations of beavers.

On this subject Warburton Pike, in his fascinating book, *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada,* says: "On the second day we crossed [northwest of Great Slave Lake] a large prairie dotted with lakes, formerly the home of many beavers, and still bearing evidence of their labours in the long banks which served as dams and the huge mounds which were once their houses. The beavers have all gone long ago, and the ladies who wore the pretty fur-trimmed jackets in far-away England, and the husbands who grumbled at their price, are gone too; but the beavers have left the most impression on the face of the earth. Wonderful moulders of geography they are; a stream dammed up in a level country forms a huge lake where the forest stood, the trees fall as their roots rot in standing water, and, if the dam be not attended to by the workers, a fertile grass-covered prairie takes the place of the lake."

A species of beaver inhabited Europe, and the fur of the animal was highly esteemed long before the discovery of America. The early explorers of America when they brought back beaver skins found a ready sale for them at high prices. The furs were of little weight or bulk in comparison with value, and this helped to make the development of the traffic practicable. The prices paid were even greater, in real value, than those of to-day. Hats

made of such fur came to be so greatly in demand that in the seventeenth or eighteenth century a good " beaver " would sometimes bring ninety shillings, which is about twenty-two dollars and a half, and the purchasing power of money in those days was so much greater than now that this price was probably equivalent to at least a hundred dollars.

To obtain the precious skins men penetrated vast distances into savage wildernesses, great companies were formed to engage in the trade, and nations even fought each other for the control of regions rich in furs.

CHAPTER II

THE DISCOVERY OF HUDSON BAY AND THE GREAT LAKES

As everybody knows, Columbus sailed in search of a western route to the rich East Indies and never realized that he had discovered a New World. Even after the truth was known many Europeans regarded the new continents in the light of obstacles rather than acquisitions, and navigators continued to search for a way to "China and Cathay." In 1519 Magellan passed through the straits that now bear his name and, crossing a wide ocean, finally reached the true Indies. But the route he had discovered was long, and for generations men hoped that a more direct way through the great land barrier might be found.

For hundreds of years, in fact, adventurous sea captains kept pushing the prows of their ships up every inlet and river in the two Americas in the hope that the way would lead them at last to the open waters of the "South Sea," the Pacific of to-day. Even after it was clear that no such route existed in tropical or temperate climes, explorers continued down to our own time to try to find a way round northern North America. This search for the "Northwest Passage" forms one of the most adventurous and romantic chapters in all history.

Many such navigators there were—Cabot and Cartier, Davis and Baffin, Frobisher and all the rest—but the most important for our purpose was that famous English dreamer and adventurer, Henry Hudson. Two danger-

ous voyages he made to the foggy, frozen sea that lies to the eastward of Greenland, only to be turned back by impenetrable barriers of ice. On a third voyage, undertaken in the interest of the Dutch, he discovered, in 1609, the Hudson River, on whose bank rises to-day the great metropolis of our Western World.

In 1610 he set out from the Thames in the bark *Discovery*, and after weeks of being buffeted about by angry seas, sailed past southern Greenland and entered Hudson Straits. Ice floes and great icebergs, miles long, dangerous reefs and rocky islands, indraughts and swift currents, made navigation perilous to the last degree, while the crew muttered against going further, and the mate, a rascal named Juet, had to be deposed for mutiny. But, undaunted, Hudson sailed his ship into that great inland sea that now bears his name, and bore away southwestward, hoping that the long-sought Northwest Passage had been found. He came at last, however, to the west side of James Bay and realized that fickle fate had tricked him and that he was land-locked, with the long Arctic winter at hand and with a scanty supply of stores.

The winter proved to be the coldest any of the explorers had ever experienced. Luckily there was wood in abundance, and stone fireplaces were built on the deck of the ship. Many birds and some other kinds of game were shot, but there was a shortage of bread. The gunner died, and others of the crew suffered from scurvy. When spring came, some fish were caught, but when the ice broke up and there was a chance to sail for home, there was food left for only about two weeks. Juet, the deposed mate, and other malcontents, plotted to maroon Hudson and the loyal men so that they themselves could

have all the food and on their return home say that Hudson and the others had died.

At daybreak one morning, when Hudson came out of his cabin, three of the villains sprang upon him and bound his arms. Then the mutineers gathered round and jeered him. Hudson, his little son, and eight others, most of them weak and sick, were put into the open shallop, with some arms and cooking utensils but little or no food. One brave and loyal seaman from Ipswich was offered a chance to remain on board, but he begged to be set adrift with his commander. The ship then sailed away, leaving the boat and its occupants adrift on the great inland sea.

So passed from view Henry Hudson, one of the world's great discoverers. His fate and that of those with him remains one of the mysteries of the merciless deep. Whether they soon perished amid the angry waves, whether they were cast on some inhospitable coast and died of hunger or were slain by the savages, can never be known. A great artist has painted a famous picture which represents the old navigator in the shallop, the helm grasped in one hand while with the other he holds the hand of his little lad, who sits between his knees and looks up into his father's face. In the background beyond a stretch of water towers a mighty iceberg. And on the noble countenance of the mariner is the hopeless look of a brave man who is already staring into eternity. Whatever his fate, the famous river and the mighty bay remain the bold dreamer's monuments.

It is grim satisfaction to know that it fared ill with the mutineers. Several were slain by the Eskimos. Juet, the traitorous mate, died of starvation in sight of Ireland. Only a few survived the horrors of the homeward voyage,

From the painting by Collier

"So passed from view Henry Hudson"

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and some of them were speedily seized and punished for mutiny.

Admiral Sir Thomas Button sailed to Hudson Bay the next year on a vain search for the missing men. He wintered at Port Nelson and lost so many men from scurvy and other causes that he could bring home only one of his two ships. Other expeditions, including one sent out by the Danes, visited the Bay in this period, but all suffered dreadful hardships, and for half a century no attempt was made at settlement. The final establishment of trading posts on the great inland sea was due to activities from another direction.

About the time that Henry Hudson was making his adventurous voyages, the French, under such hardy leaders as Champlain, were settling along the St. Lawrence at Quebec, Mont Royal (Montreal), and elsewhere. Like other visitors to the New World they had great hopes of finding silver or gold, but failing they turned their attention to the fur trade. In 1615 Champlain ascended the rapids-filled Ottawa, crossed a portage track worn smooth by untold generations of moccasined feet following the great aboriginal route between East and West, reached the broad expanse of demon-infested Lake Nipissing, and floated down the current of French River.

Now they passed between pine-tufted craggy islands, where patriarchal fir-trees, shaggy with pendant mosses, cast dark shadows; while in the clear water the bleached trunks of fallen monarchs of the forest formed screens for hungry sharp-toothed muskellunges waiting for their finny prey. Again they glided between walls of gneissic granite, in whose crevices the bearded cedar clung with snake-like roots; while aloft the rock maple, the aspen, and the glistening birch reared their light green foliage

beneath the towering white pines. In places they beheld where rushing fires had scorched the rocks and left dead, blasted trunks standing amid the blackened stumps and prostrate bodies of comrades half consumed. From behind lichen-clad rocks the stealthy lynx and the hungry cougar watched them as they floated by, the awkward porcupine waddled leisurely with rustling quills into the thicket; the loons dived into the brown water; the startled deer, come down to drink, bounded off like huge rabbits; and the giant moose, standing in some cove to escape the flies, plunged shoreward, shaking his huge antlers and wet sides, and with unwieldy but silent trot vanished in the labyrinthine woods.

They passed the Five Mile Rapids, portaged round the Grand Récollet, where the river pours itself with unceasing roar into a foamy caldron, then fared onward past other rapids, and at length floated out upon the broad bosom of the "Mer Douce," the Fresh-Water Sea of the Hurons.

Here they turned southward down the expanses of Georgian Bay, threading their course among the thirty thousand islands off that iron-bound coast, which, when the Pyramids were yet undreamed of, had for ages felt the wash of summer waves and the battering of winter's ice. At their night camps on rocky islets their fires of resinous driftwood glared against the dark foliage of the trees and shone far out over the water, while from afar came the lonely cry of the loon, the howl of the hungry wolf, and the hoarse bellow of the moose. After an interval of darkness the east would glow again with a vivid fire across the waters and through the dagger-like tops of the firs and spruce, while the fading moon would fall beneath the western sky. Presently the camp would be

astir, and after a hurried meal, Champlain, his armed followers, and his aboriginal guides, would board their birch-bark canoes and paddle onward toward the villages of the Hurons. Here, in due course, they arrived and found the Récollet Father Le Caron, who had preceded them.

Thus was found a way to Lake Huron and the other great inland seas that lie beyond it. For generations the route thither by way of lakes Ontario and Erie was rendered too perilous by the hostile Iroquois to be much used by the French, but it was not long before adventurous laymen like Brulé and Nicolet and Joliet and La Salle and devoted missionaries like Allouez and Marquette had wet their canoes in the waters of lakes Michigan and Superior and had even followed the mighty Mississippi to the warm waters of the Gulf. Soon hardy *coureurs de bois* were trading with all the tribes of the interior, were mating with squaws, were rearing a dusky progeny whose sinewy muscles were to form much of the motive power behind the paddles of canoes that pushed still further westward, and were establishing posts at Detroit, Mackinaw, Vincennes, and other places. But this is a long and complicated story which has already been told far better in the picturesque pages of Parkman than it can ever be told again.

For our purpose the important point is that well before the end of the seventeenth century white men had become acquainted with Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, two of the three important "kicking off" places for the remote Northwest.

Farther south and almost a century later English traders and explorers from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina pushed over the mountain wall into the valley

of the Ohio. First the colonists and England fought France for possession of the rich region, and then the colonists wrested it from the Mother Country in the Revolution. And in 1803 the United States purchased from France the vast domain then known as Louisiana and obtained control of the Missouri River, the third great avenue of approach to the Northwest.

It was by this avenue that Lewis and Clark made much of their famous journey, but long before them French and British adventurers, pushing out from Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, had navigated the Saskatchewan, had traced the Coppermine and the Mackenzie to the Arctic Sea, and had even crossed the continent to the Pacific.

It is of the deeds and adventures of these discoverers that we shall proceed to tell.

CHAPTER III

PIERRE RADISSON AND HOW HIS EXPLORATIONS LED TO THE FOUNDING OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

In the ancient town of St. Malo on the coast of western France there was born, about the year 1636, a child who is known in history as Pierre Esprit Radisson. In 1651 his relatives emigrated to Canada and settled at the little post of Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence. War with the bloodthirsty Iroquois was raging, and bands of the hostiles prowled almost constantly about the post, but one spring morning Radisson, then only sixteen, and two other youths ventured beyond the walls of the post to shoot ducks. After killing some game the warning given by a herdsman so alarmed two of them that they turned back, but Radisson, laughing at his comrades' fears, kept on until he had shot more ducks than he could carry. Hiding some of the game in hollow trees, he started for the post, only to come upon the scalped remains of his two comrades. Soon half a hundred Iroquois dashed upon him, and, though he resisted, he was quickly disarmed and bound.

The captive fully expected to be tortured to death, but his captors, struck by his youth and courage, painted him with red and black paint, dressed his hair in the Indian fashion, and took him unharmed to their village on the Mohawk, where he was adopted into the tribe. Under their tutelage he learned woodcraft as only few men except the savage can know it. Once, with a captive Algon-

quin, he slew three Iroquois and attempted to escape, but, when almost in sight of Three Rivers, the Algonquin was killed and Radisson was retaken. He was tortured and was saved from a horrible death only by the intercession of the warrior and squaw who had adopted him. Next year he accompanied a war party on a raid against the Eries and won favor by his valor. Finally, after two years of captivity, he managed to escape to Fort Orange, now Albany, where kindly Dutchmen secreted him and finally enabled him to reach New Amsterdam and then Europe.

Radisson soon returned to New France, where he was welcomed as one returned from the grave. During the next few years he had other thrilling experiences among the Iroquois. Then in 1658, the year Oliver Cromwell died and more than a score of years before William Penn founded Pennsylvania, he set out with his sister's husband, Sieur des Groseillers, on an expedition beyond the Great Lakes. After a narrow escape from the Iroquois along the Ottawa they reached Green Bay on the west side of Lake Michigan. A war party of Iroquois penetrated even to that remote region, but Radisson led a party of warriors and slew the raiders to the last man. Thence the explorers penetrated to the Mississippi, ten years before Marquette and Joliet reached it, and perhaps even to the Missouri, visiting or hearing of strange tribes—the Sioux, the Mandans, the Assiniboines, the Crees, and others—seeing many wonderful sights, and winning the honor, long obscured, of being the first white men to penetrate into the Northwest beyond the Great Lakes. Finally they returned to Montreal and Quebec with a rich cargo of furs.

Radisson and Groseillers now became eager to find a

way to the Sea of the North—Hudson Bay—of which they had heard vague reports. But New France at this time regulated the fur trade by license, and the corrupt governor, D'Avaugour, refused to grant them a license unless they would give him half the profits. They refused, and, slipping away from Three Rivers in the night, joined Indians from the Upper Country. Repeatedly they had to fight Iroquois war parties along the way, but in the autumn they reached Lake Superior, coasted along the south shore past the Pictured Rocks, and somewhere in the region northwest of the lake "built themselves the first fort and the first fur post between the Missouri and the North Pole." This was in 1661, and the nearest settlement of white men was probably two thousand miles away.

It was impossible for two men to keep watch at night, so Radisson, ever ready in expedients, rigged up a series of little bells about the hut, and these bells were fastened to strings in such a way that any man or animal running against the strings would start the bells to tinkling. Often the sleepers were awakened by animals that had run against the strings, but luckily the Indians never attempted to surprise them.

The Indians, in fact, showed themselves very friendly, being eager to trade their furs for guns, knives, beads, and other gewgaws dear to the savage heart. Friendly relations were established with the Saulteaux, or Ojibwas, the Crees, and other tribes. The two explorers spent the winter in a great Cree encampment. The hunting proved bad, and many of the Indians starved to death. Finally some Sioux, who were anxious to trade with the white men, brought timely supplies of food. Radisson and his partner took back to their post a great store of furs.

That summer the explorers traveled northward along the rivers with their Cree friends and seem to have reached Hudson Bay, though whether or not they did so is a matter of dispute. Finally, in the spring of 1663, the two returned to the Lake Superior country, and thence made their way to Montreal, accompanied by hundreds of their Indian friends, bringing many canoe loads of furs. A different governor now ruled New France, but he caused Radisson and Groseillers to be so heavily fined that only a pittance was left to show for their efforts.

Disgusted by this and later mistreatment, the two explorers fled to Nova Scotia and thence to Boston. Efforts to reach Hudson Bay by sea failed disastrously, but in Boston the two Frenchmen, now almost penniless, became acquainted with Sir George Cartwright, and this nobleman, who had great influence at the English court, persuaded them to go with him to England. They were captured on the way by a Dutch cruiser and were landed in Spain, but finally reached London.

The explorers were received by King Charles II and were granted a small stipend by him, but war and a great plague delayed the fulfilment of vague promises made by the court. Sir George Cartwright did what he could for them, and finally the famous Prince Rupert become interested in their plans. As a dashing youth Rupert had led the Royalist cavaliers of Charles II against the Roundheads in England's great Civil War, and he was now interested in the sea and exploration. Two ships were fitted out to go to Hudson Bay. The one bearing Radisson was so badly damaged by a storm that it had to turn back, but the other, which carried Groseillers, reached Rupert River on James Bay and returned the next year, heavily laden with a rich cargo of furs.

The profits were so great that a group of rich and powerful men obtained, in 1670, from the king a royal charter for "The Gentlemen Adventurers Trading to Hudson's Bay." Thus was formed the famous Hudson's Bay Company, now the oldest corporation in the world. Prince Rupert was the first governor. The Company received a monopoly on all the trade in the Hudson Bay region, and their power ultimately was exercised over a region as large as Europe.

For two centuries and a half the Company has continued to do business. It has surrendered some of its special privileges, but its fur posts still dot the shores of rivers and lakes in the Canadian Northland, while it has great department stores in the large cities. Its business is still immensely profitable, and travelers in Canada soon become familiar with its initials on freight packages and elsewhere—"H. B. C.," which the waggish interpret as meaning "Here before Christ."

The later history of Radisson was a checkered one. He lost favor with his English patrons, and returned to the service of France and waged war against the Company he had helped to found. Then he grew dissatisfied again, and once more entered the service of the Company. The last years of the old Pathfinder were spent in London as a pensioner of the Company.

In the long series of wars between England and France in the century following the founding of the Company its posts were often captured by French raiders, but they were always retaken or else were restored when peace was declared. Sometimes the Company experienced lean periods, but, on the whole, it was prosperous and paid large dividends to its lucky stockholders.

The Company established posts at the mouths of the

Churchill, Nelson, Albany, and Rupert rivers, and elsewhere on the shore of Hudson and James bays, but it made no effort to colonize the country, for that would have been to defeat its prime object of obtaining furs. The wars with France forced the Company to build strong forts which, considering the remoteness of the region in which they stood, were sometimes of immense size. That called Fort Prince of Wales, at the mouth of Churchill River, was about three hundred yards square, with walls of hammer-dressed stone, thirty feet thick at the bottom and twenty at the top, and mounting forty cannon. Rarely, if ever, however, did these forts have sufficient men to man them. When La Perouse appeared before Fort Prince of Wales in 1782 there were not enough trained men within to work a single gun, and the commander, Samuel Hearne, had to surrender the place without resistance. The French did what they could to destroy the fort, and it was never again reoccupied. A hundred and eleven years later a Canadian explorer, J. W. Tyrrell, visited the ruins and wrote of them:

"As La Perouse left the Fort, so did we find it. For the most part the walls were still solid, though from between their great blocks of granite the mortar was crumbling. The guns, spiked and dismounted, were still to be seen lying about on the ramparts and among the fallen masonry. In the bastions, all of which were standing, were to be seen the remains of walls and magazines, and in the centre of the fort stood the walls of the old building in which Hearne and his men had lived. The charred ends of roof-beams were still attached to its walls, where, undecayed, they had rested for the past one hundred and eleven years."

For a century following its establishment the Hudson's

From drawing made by George Catlin in 1832

A Blackfoot Medicine Man

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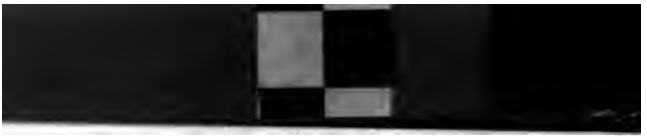
Bay Company was generally content to trade with the Indians who brought furs to its posts on the Bay, and it made small effort to extend its operations inland. In 1691-92 a man named Henry Kellsey, who was on intimate terms with the Indians and had married a squaw, made a trip into the interior, but where he actually went is a matter of dispute. Half a century later, in 1754, Anthony Hendry ascended Hayes River and other streams and finally reached the broad Saskatchewan, where he found a small trading post established the previous year by a Frenchman named De La Corne, who had come into the country by way of the Great Lakes and Lake Winnipeg. Hendry traveled westward over the great plains to within a short distance of the Rocky Mountains but did not actually see them. He did see, however, great bands of buffaloes, and helped to kill many of them. On one of the hunts two of his Indian comrades were horribly mangled by a savage grizzly bear, and Hendry's is one of the first allusions to this mightiest of all North American wild beasts. Far out on the plains Hendry paid a visit to the Blackfeet and found them in possession of many horses, in riding which they made use of hair halters, buffalo-skin pads or saddles, and hide stirrups. But when he returned to Hudson Bay and said that he had seen Indians who rode horses, he was laughed at as a liar.

Of the interesting and hazardous experiences of another man who sought to find out what lay in the far interior we shall now proceed to tell in greater detail



CHAPTER IV

SAMUEL HEARNE AND HIS SEARCH FOR A COPPER MINE

On December 7, 1771, a small party of Chipewyan Indians and one white man emerged from the stone gateway of Fort Prince of Wales on the desolate western shore of Hudson Bay and, amid a chorus of shouts from the garrison and trading clerks, set off westward toward the unexplored interior. A deep snow covered the ground, and over this the party dragged with their own hands their long narrow sledges, for at that time these Indians had not yet begun to use dogs for that purpose. There were, however, a few dogs with the party, and these carried heavy loads upon their backs, as did also the hard-working squaws.

The white man was an Englishman named Samuel Hearne. Though only twenty-seven, he had already seen much of the world. At eleven he had entered the British navy and fought in several bloody engagements of what we call the French and Indian War. Later he went to Hudson Bay as an employee of the great fur Company, and for several years was engaged in trading with the wild Eskimos up and down the coast north of Churchill River. He was now setting off on a most hazardous journey.

Many years before, when the Company's men first visited the Bay, they had found the Indians in possession of weapons and tools hammered out of native copper. Now and then Indians who came to the posts to trade would bring a nugget of the metal with them and when ques-

tioned about where they had obtained it would reply that it came from the shores of a river many weeks' journey to the northwest and that there it existed in such abundance that ships could be laden with it as easily as with boulders from a beach.

Such stories aroused great interest among the white men, and repeated efforts were made to find the mines. In 1719, for example, two vessels under command of Captain Knight, an old mariner, eighty years of age, sailed northward in search of the mine. But both ships were cast away on the barren shore of Marble Island south of Chesterfield Inlet, and not one of the crew was ever seen again. Fifty years elapsed before their fate became certainly known through the finding of the bottoms of the ships, and cannon, anchors, and other articles belonging to the ill-fated expedition, as well as skeletons of some of the crew.

In 1769, the home authorities of the Hudson's Bay Company decided to send out some competent person overland to search for the copper mine, and Hearne was selected for the task. He was now setting out on his third attempt. Two years before, with two white companions, he had started with some of the northern Indians, but in a few weeks the Indians grew weary of the journey and plundered the white men of most of their possessions. After great hardships Hearne and his white companions managed to return to the fort. Undaunted, Hearne, as soon as it could be arranged, again set out with another party of Indians. Again there was trouble with the guides, while a high wind blew over and broke the quadrant with which the white man calculated longitude and latitude, and he decided to return. After nearly nine months of adventurous wandering through the Barren

Grounds, the explorer again found himself back at the fort.

But on the return trip Hearne had the good fortune to fall in with a northern Indian leader named Matonabbee, who was going to the post to trade. In his youth this man had lived for several years at the trading post and had learned some of the white man's customs, and to speak English. He was a man of great size and courage, resourceful in times of trial, and more trustworthy than the other Indians.

Matonabbee aided Hearne and listened to his story. He pointed out mistakes made in the previous efforts. For example, he said that it was a fatal blunder not to take any squaws along. "Women," said he, "were made for labor; one of them can carry, or haul, as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing; and, in fact, there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance, or for any length of time, in this country without their assistance. Though they do everything, they are maintained at trifling expense; for as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence."

Matonabbee himself volunteered to conduct Hearne to the copper mine, and Hearne gladly accepted the offer. After a stay of less than two weeks at the fort the adventurous explorer once more set out on the quest. With him he took another quadrant, a supply of ammunition, and some articles to trade with the Indians.

The country through which their way led at first is flat and barren, almost destitute of trees, and with hardly any game to be found. The Indians always hurried through the region as speedily as possible, yet often suf-

fered bitterly from lack of food. Matonabbee had cached a supply of meat at Egg River, to be used on the return trip. But when they reached the cache after nine days' travel, they found that it had been plundered by other Indians. As the supply of food that had been brought from the fort was nearly exhausted, they for ten days traveled onward across the barren lands in a state of semi-starvation. For the last three days of that time they did not taste a morsel of anything, "except," says Hearne, "pipes of tobacco and a drink of snow water; and as we walked daily from morning till night, and were all heavy laden, our strength began to fail."

On the 26th of December the party finally reached a patch of woods and saw some caribou, a sort of wild reindeer, four of which they killed. Next morning the meat was brought to camp, and the party halted for a feast. The Indians "never ceased eating the whole day"; Matonabbee, in fact, consumed so much that he was ill for several days. With these Indians it was always either a feast or a famine, and the quantity of meat they were able to consume was almost incredible.

In the course of their long trip Hearne's party, in his own words, "fasted many times two whole days and nights; twice upwards of three days; and once, while at She-than-nee, near seven days, during which we tasted not a mouthful of anything, except a few cranberries, water, scraps of old leather, and burnt bones. On those pressing occasions I have frequently seen the Indians examine their wardrobes, which consisted chiefly of skin-clothing, and consider what part could best be spared; sometimes a piece of an old, half-rotten deer skin, and at others a pair of old shoes, were sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger."

Hearne says that in times of famine the Indians of the Hudson Bay region were sometimes reduced to the desperate expedient of cannibalism. Among some of the tribes it was generally believed that when a person had once been driven to the necessity of eating human flesh he became so fond of it that no one thereafter was safe in his company. A *weendigo,* as one who was known to have been guilty of making such a horrible repast was called, was always thereafter not only detested but shunned; sometimes he was even slain. Hearne relates that in the spring of 1775, when building a new station at Cumberland House, an Indian came to the post alone and without either gun or ammunition. The fact that he carefully concealed a bag of provisions led some of the Indians at the post to become suspicious, and they examined the bag and pronounced the meat in it to be human flesh, though in reality it was not so at all. All Hearne's authority was required to prevent the Indians from killing " this poor, inoffensive wretch, for no crime but that of traveling about two hundred miles by himself, unassisted by firearms for support in his journey."

On New Year's Day Hearne's party reached a large lake and there found two tents in which two Indian men and some of the wives and children of the Indians with Hearne had been awaiting the return of their relatives. The men had no guns, and the sole dependence for food had been fish and what few rabbits could be snared. The fish were caught through holes cut in the ice; some with hooks but most with nets.

The Indian nets were chiefly made out of small thongs cut from raw caribou hides, though twisted willow bark was occasionally used, especially by the more southern tribes. The thongs when dry appeared very good, but

after being soaked in water for a time they would become so slippery that when a large fish struck the net the hitches would sometimes slip and let the fish escape. Furthermore, the nets would soon rot unless frequently taken out of the water and dried.

Setting a net in a river or lake that was frozen over was no small task. The Indians must first cut a number of holes ten or twelve feet apart and reaching far enough to stretch the net to its full length. As the ice was often three or four feet in thickness, the cutting of the holes required much labor, especially when the fishermen had no better tools than chisels of caribou horn. When the holes were ready, a line was passed under the ice by means of a pole stuck into one of the end holes, and by means of two forked sticks this pole was pushed from hole to hole until it arrived at the last. The pole was then taken out, and the net was made fast to the line and was hauled under the ice, a large stone being tied to each of the lower corners in order to keep the net properly expanded. When it was thought desirable to examine the net, it could be pulled from under the ice by means of the line. When the fish had been taken out, if there had been a catch, the net could easily be pulled back into place and secured as before.

Only in certain spots in lakes and rivers could nets be set with any likelihood of success. In country with which they were familiar the Indians knew many of these spots, and they usually managed to camp close to them. Often more fish would be caught than could be used, and in such times of plenty the lazy savages would sometimes neglect to attend to the nets, with the result that the fish would spoil in them. At other times no fish at all, or at most very few, would be caught for days and even

weeks. More than once starvation and death resulted from failure of the fish supply.

When they made a new net, these Indians would tie a number of birds' bills and feet to the head and foot ropes and at the four corners would fasten the jaws and toes of others. They were so superstitious as to believe that it would be useless to set a net unless it was thus equipped. The first fish caught in a new net must not be boiled in water but must be broiled whole over a fire. The flesh was then carefully taken from the bones without dislocating the joints, after which the skeleton was laid on the fire and consumed. Similar ceremonies must be observed when trying a new hook for the first time. It was also thought essential to conceal charms in the bait in order to attract the fish.

For many days the party traveled leisurely onward. Caribou were usually abundant, and sometimes the hunters killed many more than could be eaten. The woods trended to the southward, and the party moved in that direction in order to avoid the open Barren Grounds, where there was neither firewood nor much game at that season of the year. This route, Matonabbee told Hearne, was the best course to follow, but he said that when spring advanced the caribou would begin migrating toward the Arctic coast and it would then be possible to travel northward in a direct line for the Coppermine River.

The woods in this region were chiefly of spruce, with some birch and trembling aspen on the hillsides. Most of the trees were dwarfed and ill-shapen, stunted by the cold winds from the north. There was also dwarf juniper, and here and there, especially around ponds and swamps, some willows.

As the temperature was usually far below zero, fire-

wood was absolutely essential. To have ventured out upon the treeless barrens in that season would have been highly hazardous. But with plenty of wood it was possible to keep reasonably comfortable inside the tepees of caribou skin. A tepee is, as most readers probably know, a sort of conical tent which has a hole left in the top. A fire can be kept burning on the ground in the center, and the smoke emerges from the orifice at the top. Cooking can be done over this fire, and the inmates can sit or sleep around it and keep warm, though at times the smoke is likely to be troublesome, especially to a person standing or sitting up. Of all forms of tents, the tepee is the best suited for winter in the wilderness. Unless some kind of stove can be taken along, any other form of closed tent is, in cold weather, scarcely better than a refrigerator. Next to a tepee a tent which is open in front and slopes down toward the back is best. A fire can be kept burning before it, and the heat will be reflected down upon the persons sleeping within. In one respect a shelter tent of this sort is superior to a tepee: it is much lighter and hence can be more easily carried.

Early in March, 1772, on the shore of Whooldyah'd Whoie, or Pike Lake, Hearne's party came upon the encampment of some northern Indians who were obtaining subsistence by catching caribou in a pound or inclosure. When they built such a pound the Indians would seek out a trail on which the caribou were accustomed to travel, and would then construct a fence of brushy trees around a considerable tract of ground. Hearne says that he saw inclosures a mile around and was told there were others still more extensive. The entrance to the pound was no larger than a common gate, and the inside was crowded with a maze of small counter-hedges or fences, in every

opening of which strong snares of hides were set. The ends of these snares were attached either to growing saplings or else to loose poles of such a size and length that a deer could not drag it far without its becoming entangled among stumps or trees.

When the pound was ready, the Indians would stick a row of small brushwood in the snow on either side of the door or entrance, and these were continued out on the open plain where neither stick nor stump besides was to be seen, which made them the more distinctly observed. The two lines were ranged in such a way as to form two sides of a long acute angle, the apex of which was at the entrance of the pound, while the broad opening was often two or three miles away. Often a lake or river would be used for one side; in fact, the Indians usually sought a place where such a natural barrier was available.

The Indians always pitched their camp on or near some hill from which they could keep watch over the path leading to the pound. Whenever they saw caribou going that way, men, women, and children would make a detour till they got behind the game and would then step into view and move toward the pound in crescent formation. The caribou, believing themselves pursued, would usually run straight forward along the path between the rows of poles until they entered the pound. The Indians would close in and block up the entrance with some brushy trees that had been made ready for that purpose. The squaws and children would then walk round outside the inclosure to prevent the caribou from breaking or jumping the fence, while the men were engaged in spearing the animals caught in the snares and in shooting with bows and arrows those that remained loose in the pound.

In this way the Indians often killed even more game

than they could use. Many families would sometimes be able to obtain a plentiful supply of food for a whole winter without being obliged to move their tents more than once or twice during the season. Such an easy method of procuring food was, of course, wonderfully well adapted to the support of the women and children and of the old and the infirm. In fact, the Indians who were content to live in this manner rarely experienced starving times. It was those who traveled long distances to trade their furs at the posts that were most likely to suffer serious privations and hardships.

On the 8th of April the party came to a small lake with a long, unpronounceable Indian name. Here they remained for about ten days, drying and pounding caribou meat and cutting light tepee poles for use on the Barren Grounds, where no poles could be found. In the fall these poles could also be converted into snowshoe frames. Frames for canoes were also made and a store of birch-bark collected with which to cover them. The canoes themselves would not be made until the party arrived at Clowey Lake, many miles distant. At the Theley-aza River, a few miles further on, more bark was obtained, and a small party was sent ahead to Clowey Lake to have a canoe built by the time the main party should arrive.

An Indian baby was born at this place. The mother set out the same day, carrying the little creature and a considerable load, besides, on her back. The next day she had to drag a sledge also, and was often obliged to wade knee-deep in water and wet snow.

Early in May the party arrived at Clowey Lake, which lies somewhere to the east of Great Slave Lake, called by Hearne Lake Athapuscow. Here some birchbark

canoes were put together, but all were small, being only twelve or thirteen feet long and capable of carrying only two persons, one of whom must lie down on the bottom. The canoes were, however, very helpful in crossing rivers and lakes and were so light that one could be carried by a single man.

Other Indians had by this time joined the party, and it had become a considerable company. One reason for the increase in numbers was that the Indians had formed a plan to attack and murder the Eskimos, who were said to frequent the lower reaches of the Coppermine River. With this idea in mind the warriors made themselves wooden shields, with which to ward off the Eskimo arrows and spears. Most of the squaws and all of the children were left behind at Clowey Lake, and when the start was made many of the warriors also decided that they preferred to remain safely at that place.

Three weeks farther northward, on the banks of a little river, the party found several Copper Indians, with whom Matonabbee and others were already acquainted. Hearne was the first white man these Indians had ever seen.

"It was curious," writes the explorer, "to see how they flocked about me, and expressed as much desire to examine me from top to toe, as an European naturalist would a nondescript animal. They, however, found and pronounced me to be a perfect human being, except in the color of my hair and eyes: the former, they said, was like the stained hair of a buffalo's tail, and the latter, being light, were like those of a gull. The whiteness of my skin also was, in their opinion, no ornament, as they said it resembled meat which had been sodden in water till all the blood was extracted. On the whole, I was viewed as so great a curiosity in this part of the world

that during my stay there, whenever I combed my head, some or other of them never failed to ask for the hairs that came off, which they carefully wrapped up, saying, 'When I see you again, you shall again see your hair.'"

The rest of the women were left at this place, but some of the Copper Indians joined the expedition. In passing through what were called the Stony Mountains, however, the hardships were so great that many of the Indians turned back. Several musk-oxen were killed in this region, but they proved so lean that the Indians only took some strips of hide for moccasin soles.

In the middle of July the party finally reached the long-sought Coppermine River, which proved to be much smaller and more rapid than Hearne had been led to believe by the Indians. They were soon joined by four Copper Indians, while three spies were sent ahead in order to find out whether there were any Eskimos farther down the stream. In the afternoon hunters killed several musk-oxen and some caribou, and the Indians spent the rest of the day and night cutting the meat into strips and drying it before the fire. To the white man they explained that this was done in order to have a plentiful supply of ready-cooked food so that the trip to the river's mouth could be made without the need of firing guns or building fires that would alarm the Eskimos.

Two days later, while on their way down the river, the party met the returning spies, who reported that they had found five tents of Eskimos on the west side of the river. They said that the tents were in a place where the task of surprising the occupants would be easy. At once the Indians put their guns, spears, and wooden shields in order for the attack. Each warrior painted on the front of his shield some object like the sun or moon or beast

of prey, and on inquiring the object Hearne was told that each man painted on his shield the image of that being on which he relied for aid in the coming battle. All this painting was very crudely done, so that, in Hearne's words, "most of the paintings had more the appearance of a number of accidental blotches, than 'of any thing that is on the earth, or in the water under the earth.'"

Hearne viewed all these preparations with a sinking heart. He had repeatedly protested against the bloody and inhuman plan, but, says he, "so far were my intreaties from having the wished-for effect, that it was concluded I was actuated by cowardice; and they told me, with great marks of derision, that I was afraid of the Eskimo. As I knew my personal safety depended in a great measure on the favourable opinion they entertained of me in this respect, I was obliged to change my tone." Unable, therefore, to prevent the execution of the plan, Hearne accompanied the Indians but played no part in the massacre.

Taking advantage of the lay of the land, the Indians managed to approach, unsuspected, to within two hundred yards of the Eskimo camp, which lay beneath a bank at the foot of a considerable falls. Here the Indians made final preparations, painting their faces, tying up their hair so that it would not blow in their eyes, and laying aside all unnecessary clothing and other impedimenta. By the time they were finally ready it was about one o'clock in the morning, but in that high latitude, north of the Arctic Circle, it was daylight.

They then rushed forward from their ambuscade, and, as the Eskimos were all in their caribou-skin tents, most of them doubtless asleep, the Indians reached the very eves of the tents before they were perceived. Roused by

the bloodthirsty shouts outside, the poor Eskimos, men, women, and children to the number of over twenty, came rushing out and attempted to escape. The relentless Indians at once fell upon them with clubs and spears and did not spare a single person. One young girl of about eighteen years fell at Hearne's feet and twisted her arms about his legs as if to implore for mercy. He begged hard for her life, but the savages only said jeeringly that he must want an Eskimo woman for a wife, and continued to stab the poor creature until she was dead.

"My situation and the terror of my mind at beholding this butchery," writes Hearne, "cannot easily be conceived, much less described; though I summed up all the fortitude I was master of on this occasion, it was with difficulty that I could refrain from tears; and I am confident that my features must have feelingly expressed how sincerely I was affected at the barbarous scene I then witnessed; even at this hour I cannot reflect on the transactions of that horrid day without shedding tears."

Hardly had the Indians completed their bloody work when they noticed seven more Eskimo tents on the other side of the river. These tents, fortunately, had hitherto been hidden from view by the bluffs of the river. As the Indians had left their canoes some distance up the river, they had no way of crossing, but the stream was only about eighty yards wide, so they began firing at the Eskimos. Says Hearne:

"The poor Esquimaux on the opposite shore, though all up in arms, did not attempt to abandon their tents; and they were so unacquainted with the nature of fire-arms, that when the bullets struck the ground, they ran in crowds to see what was sent them, and seemed anxious to examine all the pieces of lead which they found flat-

tened against the rocks. At length one of the Esquimaux men was shot in the calf of the leg, which put them in great confusion. They all immediately embarked in their little canoes, and paddled to a shoal in the middle of the river, which being more than a gunshot from any part of the shore, put them out of the reach of our barbarians."

The victors then turned their attention to plundering the tents of the dead Eskimos, taking, in particular, the copper utensils, such as hatchets, spearheads, and knives, after which they gathered on the top of a neighboring hill, formed a circle, and, with spears raised high in air, gave many yells of victory, varied now and then by derisive yells at the surviving Eskimos, who were standing on the shoal, almost knee-deep in water.

The Indians then set out up the river, intent upon crossing in their canoes and plundering the tents on the east shore. At the foot of the falls, which are a sort of long cascade with a descent of perhaps fifteen feet, they came upon an old Eskimo woman sitting by the river, engaged in "killing salmon, which lay at the foot of the fall as thick as a shoal of herrings. Whether from the noise of the fall, or a natural defect in the old woman's hearing, it is hard to determine, but certain it is, she had no knowledge of the tragical scene which had been so lately transacted at the tents, though she was not more than two hundred yards from the place. When we first perceived her, she seemed perfectly at ease, and was entirely surrounded with the proceeds of her labour." The red wolves instantly fell upon the poor creature and slew her in a most barbarous manner. "There was scarcely a man among them who had not a thrust at her with his spear."

Some of the Indians then amused themselves catching

Photograph by the Author

A Beaver Dam

From "Franklin's First Journey"

Bloody Falls, Coppermine River

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fish with the implement the murdered woman had been using. It was merely a pole armed with a few spikes, and the method of using it was to put it under the water and haul it up with a jerk. So thick were the fish that a single jerk got usually not less than two and sometimes three or four. The fish, however, were comparatively small, few being larger than six or seven pounds, and most of them much lighter.

The savages did not long remain at the falls but returned to their canoes, crossed the river, and rushed down upon the camp on the east side. Some of the Eskimos, thinking their enemies had left for good, had returned to the camp. All of them succeeded in escaping except one old man, who was so intent on collecting his belongings that he was caught and killed. "I verily believe," says Hearne, "that not less than twenty had a hand in his death, as his whole body was like a cullender." The Indians then plundered the tents of all the copper utensils, which seemed the only objects worth taking, after which they threw the tents into the river, destroyed a great quantity of dried fish and musk-ox flesh, and broke all the stone kettles.

Thus ended this horrible scene, a scene typical of hundreds of terrible massacres in the almost constant warfare of tribe upon tribe in the America of that day. For more than a century both the Indians and the Eskimos remembered the massacre, and it was only in recent years that the long feud between them was ended by white influence. Hearne named the place Bloody Falls, and so it is called to this day. Half a century later Sir John Franklin, in his journey across the Barren Grounds to the Arctic, found at the falls several human skulls that bore the marks of violence and many other bones strewn

about on the ground, relics, no doubt, of the massacre of the long ago.

After a meal of fresh salmon, Hearne and some of the Indians followed the river some miles until they came to where it emptied into the sea. They found the sea at the river's mouth to be full of islands and shoals. The ice was not broken up but was melted away for about three-quarters of a mile from the shore. There were no growing trees whatever, and, the moss being wet, when the Indians shot a musk-ox they were forced to eat the meat raw, "which was intolerable, as it happened to be an old beast." The explorer did not linger long on the coast, but after erecting a mark and taking possession of the coast on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, he set out on the return journey.

On the way the party visited the Copper Mountains, where were located the mines which were the main object of Hearne's long journey. These mountains lay about thirty miles "south south east" of the river's mouth. The Indians had represented at the trading posts that the hills were entirely composed of copper, "all in handy lumps, like a heap of pebbles," and that ships could come up the river from the sea and be ballasted with ore, instead of stone, "and that with the same ease and dispatch as is done with stone at Churchill River." But Hearne had already seen that ships probably could never reach the mouth of the river because of the ice, while the stream itself in many places was not navigable even by canoes. Furthermore, although the party spent four hours searching for copper, they found only one piece of any size. This weighed about four pounds. It was later sent to England, and is still in the possession of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Hearne believed, however, that formerly the metal was more abundant. In places he saw well-beaten paths made many years before by natives seeking the mineral. Prior to the establishment of posts on Hudson Bay these northern Indians had no other metal but copper among them, and of necessity they had been more eager to find it. Out of it they made hatchets, ice-chisels, knives, awls, arrowheads, spearheads, etc. In fact, they still set great store by the metal and preferred it to iron for many purposes.

The Indians had a strange tradition to the effect that the first discoverer of the mines was a squaw, who had a reputation as a conjurer. For several years she conducted parties thither, but on one such trip, having been badly treated by the men, she became so angry that she declared she would sit on the mine till she sunk into the ground and that all the copper should sink with her. Next year, when the Indians came for more copper, they found her sunk to the waist, though still alive, and the copper was much scarcer. By the following year she had entirely disappeared, and thereafter there could be found only a few scattered pieces of copper, whereas before it had lain about on the ground in great heaps so that no search for it had been necessary.

The homeward journey from the Coppermine River took eleven months. On the way Hearne and his party visited Great Slave Lake. There and elsewhere they caught great numbers of fish, some of the lake trout weighing as much as forty pounds. On the south side of Great Slave Lake they also found many buffaloes, and Hearne's account of these animals is the first mention of the northern species of this animal, which is now called the wood bison. Strangely enough it is in the region

northwest of this lake that the only wild buffaloes now remain.

Hearne says that the bulls seemed to him to be bigger than English oxen. "In fact, they are so heavy that when six or eight Indians are in company at the skinning of a large bull, they never attempt to turn it over while entire, but when the upper side is skinned, they cut off the leg and shoulder, rip up the belly, take out the intestines, cut off the head, and make it as light as possible, before they turn it to skin the under side. The skin is in some places of an incredible thickness, particularly about the neck, where it often exceeds an inch. The horns are short, black, and almost straight, but very thick at the roots or base."

Hearne did not exaggerate the size of these great beasts. In 1910 I saw at Edmonton the unmounted skin of a bull that had been shot by an explorer named Harry Radford, who was later murdered by Eskimos in the region of Chesterfield Inlet. The beast had weighed almost a ton and a half. The hide, even when dry, was almost an inch thick, and would have been a heavy load for a powerful man.

The latter part of the journey was through country inhabited by moose, and Hearne has much to say about these great animals, which are the biggest of all the deer family. He says that they were the hardest to kill of all the game of that region. Their flesh he considered good, though somewhat coarse; the tongue and the gristle of the nose he pronounces excellent. The skins of the moose were much used by the Indians for moccasins, clothing, and tepee covers. The method employed to tan the hides is described as follows:

"To dress those skins according to the Indian method,

a lather is made of the brains and some of the softest fat or marrow of the animal, in which the skin is well soaked, when it is taken out and not only dried by the heat of the fire but hung up in the smoke for several days; it is then taken down and well soaked and washed in warm water till the grain of the skin is perfectly open and has imbibed a sufficient quantity of water, after which it is taken and wrung as dry as possible, and then dried by the heat of a slow fire; care being taken to rub and stretch it as long as any moisture remains in the skin. By this simple method, and by scraping them afterwards, some of the moose skins are made very delicate both to the eye and the touch."

One day in midwinter when some of the Indians were out hunting they saw the track of strange snowshoes and on following the trail for some distance they found a little hut and in it a comely young squaw, sitting alone. They brought her to the tents of the main party, and she proved to be of the Western Dogrib Indian tribe. One night, two years before, the Athabasca Indians had surprised the encampment in which she was living, and butchered every soul except herself, her four-months-old papoose, and three other young women. She concealed the infant in a bundle of clothing and in the darkness it was not noticed by her captors, but when the party reached the tepees of the victors the Athabasca squaws began to examine the bundle and discovered the infant. One of them took the child from the mother and barbarously murdered it on the spot.

The mother was forced to become the wife of one of the victors and was in most respects well treated by him, but she was unable to reconcile herself to living with a people who had murdered her child and relatives. When

a favorable opportunity came, she fled into the wilderness, hoping to return to her own people. But she had been taken by canoe along so many winding rivers and across so many lakes that she had forgotten the homeward way, and, therefore, made shift to live alone.

When she escaped, her only metal implements were five or six inches of an iron hoop made into a knife, and an iron arrowhead, which she used as an awl. With these poor tools she managed, however, to make excellent snow-shoes and other useful articles. She also made a hut to shelter her from the winter blasts and contrived to kindle a fire by knocking together two hard sulphurous stones. This method of fire-making was, however, attended with great trouble and was not always successful, so she was careful not to permit her fire to go out during the whole winter.

With her she had also succeeded in taking a few caribou sinews, and these she used in making snares and sewing her clothing. She caught many rabbits, grouse, and squirrels, and even contrived to kill two or three beavers and some porcupines. When discovered she had a small stock of provision by her, and had lived so well that she was in good health and condition. When the deer sinews were exhausted, she supplied their place by twisting together with great skill and dexterity the sinews of rabbits. With the skins of the rabbits she had made herself a warm and comfortable winter suit. One would naturally suppose that a person in her forlorn and dangerous situation would have been content to do only the things absolutely necessary for subsistence, but even in that remote wilderness her feminine instinct for beauty and adornment had asserted itself. In the words of Hearne: "The materials, though rude, were very curiously wrought, and

so judiciously placed, as to make the whole of her garb have a very pleasing, though rather romantic appearance."

Some of her moments of leisure from hunting and other work she used in twisting the inner rind or bark of willows into small lines, like net twine. She had several hundred fathoms of this by her, and with it she intended in the spring to make a fishing net.

Her appearance was so attractive and her accomplishments as a worker were so great that a large number of her discoverers resolved to have her for a wife. As was customary in such cases, a great wrestling match took place, with the squaw as the prize to the victor. She was actually won and lost by nearly half a score different men the same evening. Even Matonabbee, who at this time already had eight wives, would have entered the lists had not one of his helpmates raised a laugh by telling him before the rest that he already had too many. This greatly enraged Matonabbee, and he struck and kicked the poor girl who dared to speak out thus so hard that after lingering for some weeks she died.

On the homeward way Hearne's party passed through much good beaver country, and the Indians spent a great deal of time hunting these animals, both for their fur and flesh. Hearne gives an extended description of the habits of the beaver, a description wholly free of the fanciful exaggerations common then, and even now met with.

"When the beaver which are situated in a small river or creek are to be taken," says Hearne, "the Indians sometimes find it necessary to stake the river across to prevent them from passing; after which they endeavour to find out all their holes or places of retreat in the banks. This requires much practice and experience to

accomplish, and is performed in the following manner: Every man being furnished with an ice chisel, lashes it to the end of a small staff about four or five feet long; he then walks along the edge of the bank and keeps knocking his chisel against the ice. Those who are well acquainted with that kind of work well know by the sound of the ice when they are opposite to any of the beavers' holes or vaults. As soon as they suspect any, they cut a hole through the ice big enough to admit an old beaver, and in this manner proceed until they have found out all their places of retreat, or at least as many of them as possible. While the principal men are thus employed some of the understrappers, and the women, are busy breaking open the houses, which at times is no easy task; for I have frequently known these houses to be five and six feet thick; and one in particular was more than eight feet thick on the crown. When the beavers find that their habitations are invaded, they fly to their holes in the banks for shelter; and on being perceived by the Indians, which is easily done, by attending the motion of the water, they block up the entrance with stakes of wood, and then haul the beaver out of its hole, either by hand, if they can reach it, or with a large hook made for that purpose, which is fastened to the end of a long stick."

Beaver were sought by the Indians both for their skins and also for their flesh, which is very rich and greasy. Beaver skins were, in fact, the main article of trade, and were made the unit of value by the Hudson's Bay Company. Stamped tokens of metal or leather were generally used instead of money; such a token was called a "made beaver." An otter skin was said to be worth, not so many shillings or pounds, but so many "made beaver."

During his long stay in the region about Hudson Bay Hearne not only had many opportunities to study the beaver in its native habitat but he " kept several of them till they became so domesticated as to answer to their name, and follow those to whom they were accustomed, in the same manner as a dog would do; and they were as much pleased at being fondled as any animal I ever saw. I had a house built for them, and a small piece of water before the door. . . . When the Indians were absent for any considerable time, the beaver discovered great signs of uneasiness, and on their return shewed equal marks of pleasure, by fondling on them, crawling into their laps, laying on their backs, sitting erect like a squirrel, and behaving to them like children who see their parents but seldom.

" In general, during the winter they lived on the same food as the women did, and were remarkably fond of rice and plum pudding: they would eat partridges and fresh venison very freely, but I never tried them with fish, though I have heard they will at times prey on them. In fact, there are few of the granivorous animals that may not be brought to be carnivorous. It is well known that our domestic poultry will eat animal food: thousands of geese that come to London market are fattened on tallow craps; and our horses in Hudson Bay would not only eat all kinds of animal food, but also drink freely of the wash or pot liquor intended for the hogs. And we are assured by the most authentic authors that in Iceland not only black cattle, but also the sheep, are almost entirely fed on fish and fish bones during the winter season."

Lest it be supposed that Hearne is " nature faking " in these remarks, I will add that even to-day it is so difficult to obtain forage at some of the northern Hudson's Bay

posts that it is not uncommon to feed cows during the winter on dried fish.

On the last day of June, 1772, Hearne at last reached Fort Prince of Wales, after an absence of almost nineteen months. During that time he had lived almost precisely the same as the Indians. He says that of all their various kinds of food he had partaken of every sort, no matter how disgusting, save only lice and the warbles or grubs in the backs of caribou.

His journey had not resulted in the discovery of any rich mine of copper, but it had put an end to any lingering notion that there could be a Northwest Passage by sea from the western side of Hudson Bay to the Pacific. He wrote an account of his trip, and this was published at London, in 1795, under title of *A Journey from Prince of Wale's Fort, in Hudson Bay, to the Northern Ocean.* For more than a century this book remained the chief source of information regarding a large part of the Barren Grounds; even to-day some of the places Hearne visited have never been seen by another white man. The volume will always remain a classic on the habits and customs of the Indians of that region.

Hearne received from the Hudson's Bay Company a reward of two hundred pounds for making the journey, and in 1775, after the death of Moses Norton, the half-breed governor at Fort Prince of Wales, he became the head of that post. Seven years later the fort was captured by a French expedition under Admiral La Perouse, and Hearne was carried to Europe, but was soon released. After peace was made he returned to Hudson Bay for a few years. He died in England in 1792.

A last word should be said regarding the fate of Matonabbee, the forceful and energetic chieftain to whom the

success of the expedition was largely due. Though hot-tempered and a Solomon in the matter of wives, this leader displayed great fidelity and resourcefulness on the trip, and Hearne pays him a high tribute. He became head of all the northern Indians, and for some years, says Hearne, "continued to render great services to the Company by bringing a greater quantity of furs to their factory at Churchill River than any other Indian ever did or ever will do." But the news of the capture of the fort broke his heart. He never afterwards "reared his head" and finally in his despondency hanged himself. In the following winter six of his wives and four of his children died of starvation.

CHAPTER V

M. DE LA VERENDRYE AND HIS SEARCH FOR THE WESTERN SEA

In the period following Pierre Radisson's last overland trip Marquette, Joliet, and La Salle explored the Mississippi, but for seventy years no other man penetrated so far beyond the Great Lakes as Radisson had done. Then came another bold adventurer who had dreamed a dream. His name was Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Vérendrye, and he was born in 1686 at Three Rivers, Radisson's old home on the St. Lawrence. At fourteen he resolved that he would be a discoverer, but for years he fought in the wars in both America and Europe and traded in the region of the Great Lakes. Not until he was forty-four or forty-five years did he obtain his long-sought opportunity.

While stationed at the lonely fur post of Nepigon, north of Lake Superior, he heard from the Indians vague tales of a westward flowing river, of a vast plain devoid of timber and covered with "large herds of cattle," and an old warrior drew upon a strip of birchbark a map of rivers flowing into a "Western Sea." On fire to discover the way thither, De la Vérendrye hurried to Quebec, obtained the patronage of the governor of New France, and persuaded merchants to furnish a supply of trade goods for the venture.

With half a hundred followers, including his three sons, all boys in their teens, he set out in birch-bark canoes

from Montreal in June, 1731. Seventy-eight days of hard labor brought them to Kaministiqua, on the northwestern shore of Lake Superior, the farthest fur post then existing. From there a party, of which the explorer's son Jean was a member, pushed on and established Fort St. Pierre on the south side of Rainy Lake, and in July of the next year De la Vérendrye himself reached that post.

There followed four anxious, feverish years. The merchants at home were discontented with the financial returns of the venture, and in 1634 the explorer made the long journey back to Quebec to encourage them to continue to back him. Young Jean de la Vérendrye pushed on to Lake Winnipeg and on its flat shore built a post named Fort Maurepas. The winter of 1735-36 was a hard one in these little northwestern posts, and in the spring young Jean set out with three canoes manned by twenty voyageurs for Mackinac to bring supplies of food and ammunition.

On the way down the Lake of the Woods they were attacked upon an island by a large war band of Sioux. Not one of the white men escaped. Some days later a band of friendly Ojibwas found the place of massacre. Around the ashes of the campfires lay the mangled bodies of the slain. The headless body of young Vérendrye had been mockingly decorated with porcupine quills. Some of the heads of the dead men had been placed upon a beaver skin. The body of Father Aulneau, a young missionary who had come only recently from France, was on its knees, as if at prayer, with the right arm uplifted as if invoking the aid of God.

De la Vérendrye spent the winter of 1737-38 at Quebec, but by the following September he was back in the

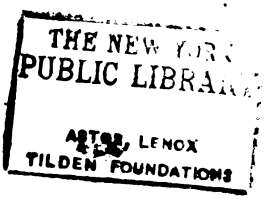
region of the present Manitoba, and at the junction of Red River and the Assiniboine established Fort Rouge, on the present site of Winnipeg. Thence he set out overland with friendly Assiniboines and visited the Mandan towns on the Missouri. But he was disappointed in his hope of hearing from them any definite information regarding his will-o'-the-wisp, the Western Sea. New posts were established by the explorer's sons near Lake Manitoba and on the Saskatchewan, but financial troubles were pressing at Montreal, and again the father had to journey thither.

Finally, in the spring of 1742, the two brothers, Pierre and Francois, set out with two French followers for the Missouri country. At the Mandan towns, after great difficulty, they obtained the services of guides, who promised to conduct them westward. For weeks they rode over the rolling plains, seeing many coyotes, antelopes, and prairie dogs, but finding no traces of human existence. In fright one of the Mandan guides deserted and turned back. In the fifth week the explorers came upon a village of Crows, who received them well and furnished fresh guides. The Crows passed them on to the Horse Indians, and the Horse Indians, in turn, guided them to the Bows, who took them with them on a war party against the Snakes.

No Snakes were found, but on New Year's Day, 1743, the explorers saw far before them the distant, jagged peaks of the Bighorn Mountains, one of the eastern ranges of the Rockies. A thousand miles of mountainous wilderness still lay between them and the Western Sea of their father's dreams, but the deed they had done was worth while. Half a century passed before any white man went beyond their " farthest West."

From drawing made by George Catlin in 1832

A Mandan Chief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As for the father himself, he lived six more troubled years, harassed by creditors and rival fur traders. Finally, in the winter of 1749, while planning a new quest, he died suddenly at Montreal.

Like many another pioneer his dream had brought him only trouble and disaster, but his name and those of his heroic sons should be placed high on the roll of those daring spirits who have braved danger and discomforts to widen the realm of human knowledge.

CHAPTER VI

HOW MACKENZIE REACHED THE ARCTIC

A RAPACIOUS governor of New France prevented the sons of La Vérendrye from continuing the work of exploration and even from trading in the vast region which the efforts of the family had made known, but more favored traders were permitted to enter in. A considerable commerce in furs developed, and posts were maintained along Red River, Assiniboine River, Lake Winnipeg, and the lower Saskatchewan. Minor explorers also made some additions to geographical information.

The conquest of New France by the British in the French and Indian War, and Pontiac's uprising, which soon followed, put a stop for a time to trading operations from Canada to the far Northwest. The Indians of that region were forced to do without European goods or to send their furs to the Hudson's Bay Company's posts on Hudson Bay. But, about 1765, adventurous English traders began to push westward from Mackinac beyond Lake Superior, and the great profits they realized quickly caused imitation. One of the most notable of these early English traders was Alexander Henry, the elder, who spent many years in the region in question and left a book of *Travels,* in which he graphically describes some of his experiences.

Hitherto, as already stated, the Hudson's Bay Company had remained content to carry on its trade from posts on the shores of the great inland sea from which it

derived its name. Thither came the Indians with their peltries, and the tribes that resided near at hand acted as middlemen for other tribes that were more remote. Under this system it was not necessary for the traders to venture far from their comfortable posts, and they were spared many of the hardships and dangers experienced by their successors.

The officials of the Hudson's Bay Company regarded the traders who entered by way of the Great Lakes as interlopers and spoke of them contemptuously as "pedlars." But the pedlars were keen business men and by carrying their goods right to the Indians they soon greatly diminished the number of aborigines who made the long journey to the Bay to trade. In consequence the old Company either had to sit and see its once lucrative commerce disappear, or adopt new methods. The latter course was followed. Agents were sent up the Hayes, Albany, York, and other rivers, and new posts were established in the interior. Of these one of the most important was Cumberland House, which was built by our old friend Hearne on the lower Saskatchewan, two years after his return from the Coppermine. The goods for these posts were sent in by way of Hudson Bay.

So great a scramble for the trade of the Plains Indians soon developed that there were scanty profits for any of the traders. Furthermore, the smallpox got among the Indians and "destroyed by its pestilential breath whole families and tribes." Feeling the need of mutual co-operation, some of the traders from Canada united their interests and formed, in the winter of 1763-64, the North-west Company, a concern that for years fought a bitter battle with the Hudson's Bay Company.

Most of the adventures in the service of the North-

west Company were men of limited ideas, with ambitions that rarely rose above a beaver skin; but now and then we meet with a man of higher type. Such an one was Alexander Mackenzie, who, in 1789, was chief trader at Fort Chipewyan, a post that had been established on the southwest shore of Lake Athabasca, seventy days' travel from Lake Superior.

Mackenzie was a native of Scotland and was then not yet thirty years old. He had served an apprenticeship of five years in a Montreal counting-house, had spent another year in the pine woods of Michigan trading with the Indians, and had then been sent by the Northwest Company to the Northwest. Big and strong of body, bold and adventurous, a man undaunted by obstacles, the unexplored regions that lay to the north and west of him were a resistless challenge to his ambitious spirit. And, first of all, he was eager to find out what became of the river that gave outlet to the great lake on which he was stationed. As soon as possible he organized an expedition to solve the riddle.

At nine o'clock on the morning of June 3, 1789—a time when American statesmen were drafting the Constitution of the United States—the party set out on its dangerous quest. Mackenzie himself rode in a big canoe, the crew of which consisted of a German and four French Canadians, two of whom were accompanied by their Indian wives, who would be useful as cooks and to make moccasins. In a small canoe was a Chipewyan Indian who went by the name of "English Chief," and his two wives. In a second small canoe were two young warriors. Mackenzie was taking these Indians to serve in the twofold capacity of hunters and interpreters. A second large canoe, in charge of M. Le Roux, one of the Company's clerks,

carried some of the baggage for the main expedition, and also a supply of trading goods; it was the intention that this canoe should part company with the rest early in the voyage and trade with the Indians about Great Slave Lake.

After going twenty-one miles upon the open lake the party entered one of the outlets, of which there were several, and seven miles down this stream the party landed to camp for the night. While the squaws and part of the men pitched the skin lodges and made camp, others dragged out the big canoe upon the beach and smeared hot spruce gum over the seams in order to stop the leaks. This is a task of which we find frequent mention in the diaries of voyageurs traveling in bark canoes, for the "birchbark," though glorified in song and story, had many weaknesses.

While these various tasks were going forward one of the hunters, with his flintlock gun loaded with large shot, was fortunate enough to kill a wild goose and a couple of ducks. No opportunity thus to eke out the larder was ever lost. With them the party carried a supply of food, chiefly pemmican, which was composed of dried buffalo meat pounded up and mixed with fat, but Mackenzie was well aware that the supply would become exhausted long before he reached his goal, unless most of the livelihood could be picked up along the way.

On the second day the voyageurs passed the mouth of the mighty Peace River, up whose mile-wide stream Mackenzie gazed with longing eyes. The next few days were spent in descending Slave River, as the stream that connects Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake is called, and much trouble was experienced in carrying round the many bad rapids which abound in this stream. This region

was already known to the white men, and three years before five men of a trading party had been drowned while trying to run one of these rapids with a cargo of goods. Mackenzie's party did not succeed in getting by this stretch of bad water without experiencing some loss. A squaw who was managing one of the smaller canoes in one of the rapids lost control of the craft; she left it and reached the shore, wet but safe; the canoe was carried over the falls and was dashed to pieces. During these days the hunters killed a number of ducks and geese and four beavers, the fat flesh of the last being very much esteemed by the aboriginal palate.

On June 9th the expedition reached Great Slave Lake, which they found to be still almost entirely covered with ice. Nets were set in the lake and yielded many "carp," whitefish, pike, lake trout, and "inconnu"; the last word means "unknown," and was applied to this fish by early voyageurs, who were unable to classify it. It is said to be found only in the Mackenzie River region, and even to-day there is difference of opinion as to what family it is a member of. It is long and thin, somewhat like a badly formed salmon, and reaches large size, but its flesh is flabby and forms poor eating, so that it is not used except in hard times. Many wild fowl, including several swans, were killed along the lake, and some dozens of swan, goose, and duck eggs were found, which lent a pleasing variety to the monotonous diet.

Warm weather and a succession of heavy rains melted the ice to such an extent that on June 15th the exepdition ventured to resume the voyage, and at half-past eleven in the evening landed on a small island. They were so far north that even at that late hour Mackenzie could see to read and write without the aid of artificial light.

Even at midnight it was so light that since the second day after leaving Lake Athabasca they had not seen a single star. About twelve o'clock the moon rose above the tops of the trees, the lower horn being in a state of eclipse, which continued for about six minutes.

The explorers were much delayed by ice and heavy winds, but luckily caught many fish, and killed wild fowl and a number of caribou, which Mackenzie calls "reindeer." On the twenty-third they came upon some lodges of Indians, whom Mackenzie calls "Red Knives" (Yellow Knives of to-day), from the color of their copper knives. These Indians knew of white men, and had many fine marten and beaver skins for sale. Mackenzie prevailed upon one of them to accompany him as a guide, and also bought a large canoe for the use of the guide and the two young Indians who were already in his service. Le Roux's trading party here said good-by to the explorers.

Great Slave Lake has many long arms, and even the Indian guide was at first unable to find the outlet, whereupon the "English Chief" became greatly enraged and threatened to kill him. At last, however, he found the exit, a river a mile wide, and down this the flotilla steered. The explorers were now fairly launched into the Unknown, for no white man had ever before been upon this stream. It was, of course, the Mackenzie River of to-day.

In a day or two they passed beyond the farthest point where their guide had ever been. What would they find ahead? What reception would be given them by the natives farther down? All was uncertain. That there were Indians ahead there could be little doubt. One day they picked up a white goose that had lately been shot by an arrow and was still quite fresh. The old wild fowl

were now moulting and were unable to fly; one day the Indians ran down and caught five swans and the same number of geese. Such chases were very fatiguing, but they saved ammunition and helped to keep the pots filled with meat.

For days the explorers drifted down the great river, killing some game and expecting momentarily to reach rapids or falls, but never doing so. At one place they passed a range of mountains to westward, high enough to bear, at that season of the year, small patches of snow. In many places along the shores they perceived old Indian encampments but it was not until the 5th of July that they actually saw any Indians. As they drew near the camp the natives displayed great alarm, some running about in great confusion, others fleeing to the woods, and yet others hurrying to their canoes. Mackenzie and his Indian hunters landed and shouted messages of peace in the Chipewyan tongue to those who remained, but such was the confusion and terror of the natives that, although they understood that language, some time elapsed before they seemed to comprehend. Finally their fears were allayed, and they hastened to call their fugitive companions from their hiding-places.

The encampment consisted of five families of Slave and Dogrib Indians. "We made them smoke," says Mackenzie, "though it was evident they did not know the use of tobacco; we likewise supplied them with grog: but I am disposed to think that they accepted our civilities rather from fear than inclination. We acquired a more effectual influence over them by the distribution of knives, beads, awls, rings, gartering, fire-steels, flints, and hatchets; so that they became more familiar even than we expected, for we could not keep them out of our tents:

though I did not observe that they attempted to purloin any thing."

These natives gave a discouraging account of the river ahead. They told Mackenzie that it would require several winters for him to reach the sea and that his party would be old and gray-haired before they could return. Furthermore, they would meet with horrid and dangerous monsters and would come upon two impassable falls. Mackenzie himself placed no faith in these stories, but they had a marked effect upon his Indian followers, who were already tired of the voyage and wished to turn back.

By the offer of a small kettle, an axe, a knife, and other small articles—which meant fabulous wealth in that country—Mackenzie persuaded one of the natives to accompany him. Evidently the new guide considered the trip a dangerous one, for he prepared for it with great formality. Among other things, he cut off a lock of his hair, divided it into three parts, and fastened one of each to the hair of his wife and to that of each of his two children. Having done so, he blew upon the locks three times with all his power, meanwhile chanting certain words. The reason for this ceremony Mackenzie was unable to ascertain.

Mackenzie thought these natives to be lean, ugly, ill-made people. Most were unhealthy, which he attributed to their filthy habits. They were of moderate stature, and he says that "as far as could be discovered, through the coat of dirt and grease that covers them," they appeared to be fairer in complexion than most Indians farther south. Some of the old men wore beards, while others had pulled out by the roots the hairs on their faces. The men had two double lines, either black or blue, tattooed upon each cheek from the ear to the nose. The

gristle of the nose was perforated so as to admit a goose quill or a piece or wood being stuck through the hole. Their clothing was mostly composed of dressed moose or caribou skins, decorated in some cases with porcupine quills. Some also wore bracelets and necklaces made of horn, bone, or leather. Around their heads they wore bands of leather garnished with porcupine quills and stuck round with bears' claws or other ornaments, and having suspended a few short thongs of ermine skin.

Their lodges were made of poles and bark. They had a few dishes made of wood, bark, or horn; their cooking vessels were made of spruce roots so closely woven as to hold water. When they wished to cook their food, they put it and water into these vessels and then made the water boil by cutting a succession of hot stones into it. They made fish nets out of willow bark, and for hunting purposes used bows and arrows and spears tipped with bone. Their axes were of stone. They made much use of snares in catching caribou, moose, and smaller game. Fire they kindled by striking together a piece of pyrites and a flint stone over a piece of touchwood. Though they had never before seen white men, they had some pieces of iron, which they had obtained from the Red Knives and Chipewyans.

The new guide soon sickened of the journey, and it became necessary to watch him at night to prevent his deserting and even to force him to embark. On the first day that he accompanied the party they passed the outlet of Great Bear Lake. Several times they saw other small parties of Indians, from whom they obtained fish, rabbits, and other food. At one of these camps another Indian agreed to go as a guide, so the other was permitted to return. The volunteer speedily regretted his

offer and wished to back out but was compelled to embark. However, a night or two later he managed to escape during a rainstorm. From another encampment another guide was forced to take the place of the fugitive.

On July 11th, being then north of the Arctic Circle, Mackenzie sat up all night to observe the "Midnight Sun." At half-past twelve he awoke one of the men to view a spectacle he had never before witnessed. On seeing the sun well up in the sky, the fellow thought that it was time to embark and began to call the rest of the party. Mackenzie could hardly convince him that the sun had not set at all.

For some time the guides and the other Indians of the region had been warning the explorers that they would soon meet the Eskimos, whom they represented to be fierce and bloodthirsty. From time to come they passed old encampments of these people, and around them saw pieces of whalebone, old sledge runners, the bones of white bears, and at one place a square kettle that had been hollowed out of a stone. The skulls of some peculiar animals also aroused their curiosity; Mackenzie supposed them to be heads of the seahorse.

The ground in this region was found to be still frozen only a few inches below the surface. Trees had almost completely disappeared, and those seen were gnarly dwarfs, hardly more than bushes. The river separated into a number of meandering courses, and the explorers could only guess which one they had best follow.

On July 12th the canoes entered what the explorers thought was a lake. The water was exceedingly shallow, varying in depth from one to five feet. After going several miles, however, they came in sight of a great ice barrier which appeared to bar their further progress.

That night the water rose so much that some of the voyageurs had to get up and move the baggage higher up the shore to prevent it from being wetted and carried away. The explorers at first attributed this rise to the action of a strong northwest wind.

Next morning one of the men perceived what at first he supposed were pieces of ice in the water, but the manner in which they moved led him to think they must be animals of some sort. Mackenzie was awakened and at once pronounced them to be whales. The canoe was hurriedly got ready, and the party embarked in pursuit. But foggy weather brought an end to what Mackenzie admits was "a very wild and unreflecting enterprise." "It was," says he, "a very fortunate circumstance that we failed in our attempt to overtake them, as a stroke from the tail of one of these enormous fish would have dashed the canoe to pieces."

That night the water again rose under their baggage, and it finally dawned upon the explorers that the rise was caused by the tide, and that their "lake" was the sea. They had, in fact, reached the Arctic Ocean and the end of their outward journey.

Mackenzie strongly wished to find some Eskimos, but, though many comparatively fresh tracks were seen, the natives themselves had evidently gone elsewhere. A pole was set up on which Mackenzie engraved the latitude, his own name, and the number of persons in his party.

On the 16th the party set out on the return. It had taken them six weeks, traveling with the current, to reach the Arctic. The homeward journey occupied eight weeks, for they had to fight the current and in many places to "track" the canoes with towing lines. They saw more Indians than on the downward trip, and had some amus-

ing experiences with some of them. One evening they pitched their lodges near an Indian camp, and the hungry Indian dogs persisted in getting into Mackenzie's baggage in search of food. Mackenzie remonstrated with the natives, but without effect, and finally shot one of the offending canines dead with his pistol. When the Indians heard the report and saw the dog dead, they were seized with terror. The squaws at once grabbed up their children and fled to the woods. However, Mackenzie finally succeeded in convincing the Indians that he would do them no injury, and the fugitives returned to camp. With tears and loud lamentations the squaw to whom the dog belonged declared that the loss of five children the previous winter had not affected her so much as the death of her pet. " But her grief," says Mackenzie, " was not of very long duration; and a few beads, etc., soon assuaged her sorrow."

In the afternoon of September 12th, running before a favorable wind, the explorers finally came in sight once more of Fort Chipewyan and soon reached that place. They had been absent one hundred and two days.

Thus ended one of the most notable exploring expeditions in the history of American travel. A vast new region was made known to the civilized world, and it soon became a field for fur trading. It was only just that the mighty stream which the intrepid explorer had traced at the expense of so much effort and danger should thenceforth be known as Mackenzie River.

CHAPTER VII

HOW MACKENZIE REACHED THE PACIFIC

BEFORE 1793 no white man had ever crossed the North American continent north of Mexico. A few daring men had ventured as far westward as the Rocky Mountains, and a few mariners like Cook and Bering had sailed along the coast of what is now Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska, but no man had ever made the long and hazardous journey from sea to sea. This was a feat which the intrepid Mackenzie next undertook to perform.

In the spring following his trip to the Arctic, Mackenzie made the long journey to Lake Superior to the headquarters of the Northwest Company, only to find that the partners, whose sordid souls did not rise above beaver skins, were little interested in his discovery. Disappointed at their indifference, Mackenzie returned to Fort Chipewyan, but did not give up a new idea that had entered his busy brain. From stories told by the Indians and from his knowledge of geography he had become convinced that it would be possible to reach the Pacific by crossing the mountains to westward, and he determined to attempt the feat. Feeling himself deficient in the sciences of astronomy and navigation, he made the long journey to England in order to perfect himself in these subjects and also to obtain instruments and books. There he heard much of the voyages of Cook, Vancouver, Meares, and others and of the rivalry of Russia, Spain,

and England for the northwest coast, and these things fired his ambition.

His plan was to ascend Peace River, the mighty stream whose mouth he had passed on the journey to the Arctic. On October 10, 1792, he left Fort Chipewyan with two canoes, and two days later reached Peace River. As he explains, the name of this stream does not arise from any special quietness, but is derived from the fact that the Knisteneaux and Beaver Indians once met on its banks to arrange a treaty of peace.

For hundreds of miles, however, the lower Peace River is navigable except at one place, namely the Chutes, a fall about twenty feet high, round which Mackenzie's party made a portage. The shores along this part of the river are usually low; farther up they rise higher and higher.

On October 20th Mackenzie reached a trading post that had already been established by his Company. The weather was cold, and the explorer feared that the freeze-up was at hand, but, hurrying onward, he reached on November 1st the spot where he had arranged to pass the winter. This spot lay a few miles above the mouth of what is known as Smoky River and the present village of Peace River Landing. Two men had been sent ahead to this place the preceding spring, and with timbers these men had cut the party erected six log cabins and surrounded them with a stockade one hundred and twenty feet square.

It was usual in those days to build such stockades as protection against the Indians. The Indians at this place were a branch of the Chipewyans, but Beaver Indians from further up the stream often visited the post. Mackenzie engaged some of them to hunt for him, gave them

presents, cured one of their warriors whose thumb had been blown off by the bursting of a gun, and in general managed to keep on good terms with them. Among themselves, however, the Indians had many quarrels and fights. Thus on February 5th an Indian named White Partridge was stabbed to death by another warrior, the cause being jealousy over a woman. On another occasion two braves drew their knives and were about to engage in a carving match, but Mackenzie intervened and drove them out of the house into the snow, where they stood " for at least half an hour, looking at each other with a most vindictive aspect, and in sullen silence."

The quarrel in this instance arose out of a gambling game called " the platter," of which many of these western Indians were extremely fond. It was played with a platter or dish of wood or bark and with six round or square but flat pieces of metal, wood, or stone, whose sides were painted different colors.

Mackenzie notes that these Indians had some curious customs connected with the death of friends or relatives. Those most closely related to the departed would blacken their faces and sometimes cut off their hair; some would pierce their arms with knives or arrows. The squaws would not only cut their hair and weep but would amputate the first joint of one of their fingers. Mackenzie saw old squaws who had repeated this ceremony so often that they had not a complete finger remaining on either hand.

It was also customary to throw away or destroy every article belonging to the dead person except what was consigned to the grave with him. As many of the Indians were in debt to the traders, this custom often resulted in considerable losses to the white men. Mac-

kenzie sought to convince the Indians that the debts of the dead man ought first to be paid out of any furs he left behind him.

Peace River became clear of ice on the 25th of April, an earlier date than usual with that stream. Two weeks later Mackenzie sent off six canoe loads of furs, and, the business for the year being done, he was ready for his voyage of exploration. For this purpose he had built a new birchbark canoe about thirty feet long and four feet nine inches wide, yet so light that two men could carry her on a good road for three or four miles without resting.

On May 9th the trip began. In the canoe, besides Mackenzie himself, went nine persons, including a Scotchman named Alexander Mackay, two Indians, and two French Canadians who had accompanied the explorer on the trip to the Arctic. The baggage amounted to three thousand pounds, and included arms, ammunition, pemmican, and goods suitable to trade with or give to the Indians who might be met along the way.

For many days the route lay along streams with which I am myself familiar. For two hundred and forty miles Peace River, though often so swift as to necessitate poling or tracking in ascending it, presents no serious obstacles to navigation. The stream runs in a deep cleft or trough, and on both sides high plateaus rise up. Even Mackenzie, who was usually very staid, waxed enthusiastic over the view.

"The west side of the river," says he, "displayed a succession of the most beautiful scenery I had ever beheld. The ground rises at intervals to a considerable height, and stretching inwards to a considerable distance: at every interval or pause in the rise there is a very

gently-ascending space or lawn, which is alternate with abrupt precipices to the summit of the whole, or at least as far as the eye could distinguish. This magnificent theater of nature has all the decorations which the trees and animals of the country can afford it: groves of poplars in every shape vary the scene; and their intervals are enlivened with vast herds of elks and buffaloes: the former choosing the steeps and uplands, and the latter preferring the plains. At this time the buffaloes were attended with their young ones, who were frisking about them; and it appeared that the elks would soon exhibit the same enlivening circumstance. The whole country displayed an exuberant verdure; the trees that blossom were advancing fast to that delightful appearance, and the velvet rind of their branches, reflecting the oblique rays of a rising or setting sun, added a splendid gaiety to the scene, which no expressions of mine are qualified to describe. The east side of the river consists of a range of high land covered with the white spruce and the soft birch, while the banks abound with the alder and the willow."

From the above description it is clear that even in Mackenzie's day the country on the opposite sides of Peace River exhibited much the same differences that now impress the traveler. From the Rocky Mountains for hundreds of miles eastward the south bank (corresponding to the "east" bank of Mackenzie; for the moment he was traveling nearly south) is much more heavily wooded than the north bank, which is very parklike with alternate patches of trees and open prairie. Various theories have been offered to explain the difference. When I was descending the stream in 1916, a surveyor who was with me attributed the difference to the fact that the

north bank, being the one on which the sun shines, is the warmer and hence the bank on which most travelers pitch their camps; from this circumstance he argued that naturally there would be more forest fires on that bank and that these fires made the country on the north bank more open. Probably there is something in this explanation, but it should be added that the south slopes in that country, being drier, burn over more readily than the north slopes, which, being shaded from the sun, remain much damper. Many times in British Columbia and Alberta I have seen mountains on which the forests on the south slope had been completely burned while on the north side the trees remained vigorous and untouched.

On this part of the journey the party easily killed enough elk and buffaloes for their subsistence. On the bars of the rivers they frequently saw the tracks of enormous bears. Some of these tracks were "nine inches wide and of a proportionate length." On an island they discovered the den or winter quarters of one of the monsters—a hole ten feet deep, five feet high, and six feet wide. The Indians called this bear the "grizzly" and were never willing to attack it unless in a party of at least three or four warriors.

From a hunting party of Indians he met along the way Mackenzie learned that at the first range of the mountains there was a succession of rapids, cascades, and falls which the Indians never attempted to ascend. This obstacle was, in fact, the Great Canyon of Peace River, where the stream for over a score of miles plunges between rocky walls and forms one of the wildest stretches of water in the world. No man has ever passed through this canyon alive, and no one ever will do so.

The Indians were accustomed to carry around the

canyon and had a trail for that purpose. As I have on two different occasions made the walk over this trail in about four hours' time, I can testify that there are no tremendous difficulties to be surmounted. But Mackenzie made the mistake of not leaving the river when he came to the lower end of the trail and persisted in following the river. For two days they waged a desperate battle against rapids, and frequently were at the edge of disaster. Once a heavy swell struck the canoe with such force that the towing line was broken, and for a moment it appeared impossible that she could escape being dashed to pieces and those on board her from perishing. But another swell drove her out of the tumbling white water so that the crew were able to bring her to shore. The men were so alarmed by this adventure and by the state of the river ahead, which as far as could be seen was one white sheet of foaming water, that they began to mutter that there was no alternative save to turn back. Mackenzie realized that it would be imprudent to ask them to go farther that day, so he told them to make camp while he and one of the Indians went ahead to reconnoiter. But as far as he went he could see no end to the rapids and cascades. The river contracted to a width of no more than fifty yards, while the high rocky cliffs actually overhung the stream. From these cliffs huge fragments had tumbled down and had been dashed into small stones with sharp points, which formed the beach, where there was a beach.

Mackenzie realized that it would be hopeless to try to ascend farther by water, so the next day he sent four white men and two Indians to pick out a route around the obstacle. At sunset they returned with the word that they had reached the river above the canyon. Next

morning the explorers began the portage. The banks of the river were so steep and high that it was necessary to fell trees so that they formed a sort of railing on either side of the ascent. In getting the canoe up a rope was used. Men were sent ahead to cut a trail through the woods, and the next day Mackenzie himself aided the trail cutters. Three toilsome days were consumed in making the portage, but at last the laborious task was ended, and the party came out upon the river bank a little distance above the entrance to the canyon.

Two hundred yards further downstream the river "rushed with an astonishing but silent velocity, between perpendicular rocks, which are not more than thirty-five yards asunder; when the water is high, it runs over those rocks in a channel three times that breadth, where it is bounded by far more elevated precipices. In the former are deep round holes, some of which are full of water, while others are empty, in whose bottoms are small round stones, as smooth as marble. Some of these natural cylinders would contain two hundred gallons." More than a century after Mackenzie passed, I myself stood at this spot and saw some of these interesting "pot holes."

Peace River is the only stream except the Liard farther north that cuts right through the mighty barrier wall of the Rockies. From the canyon westward the mountains gradually rise higher until they merge in the main ranges. The river flows through a deep cleft, and on either side tall peaks tower right up from the water's edge to the region of perpetual snow. From either side raging torrents come dashing over great rocks into the main river. Altogether the region is one of the grandest in all America. One would expect the river to be one

constant succession of cascades and falls utterly impossible of navigation. In reality, there are only two considerable rapids, one near the eastern edge of the main range and the other near the western edge, and it is possible, in favorable water, to track a canoe up or down either without removing the craft from the water. The current is, however, swift, especially during high water in the spring and early summer, and Mackenzie's party spent a week of laborious effort in passing through the mountains, whose mighty cliffs they viewed with awe.

On the last day of May they finally emerged from the mountains and reached a point where the river forked. One stream, the larger one, came in from the northwest, while the other came from the south. Mackenzie's inclination would have been to follow the former, but the previous winter an old Indian who had visited the region with a war party had told him that he must take the southern branch, which, he said, would bring him to a spot where a short portage would enable him to embark on another river. This last stream, Mackenzie hoped, would be found to empty into the Pacific. Against the wishes of his men, therefore, Mackenzie ordered the prow of the canoe to be turned up the southern branch, or what is now known as Parsnip River. It was fortunate he made this decision. Had he elected instead to ascend the other, which is now known as Finlay River, he would not have reached his goal. I have twice ascended this river. It contains many obstacles to navigation and heads in a savage wilderness of mountains hundreds of miles from the Pacific.

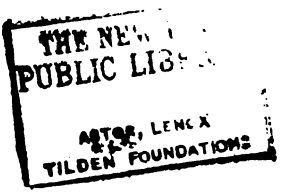
The Parsnip was in flood from the melting of the snow in the mountains, and, of course, the task of ascending it, never easy, was doubly difficult. In places the ex-

Photograph by the Author

Entrance to Peace River Canyon

Photograph by the Author

Peace River in the Heart of the Rockies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plorers could neither walk along the bank wtih their towing line nor find bottom for their poles and were obliged to pull the canoe upstream by grasping the limbs of trees. On the morning of the fifth day on this river Mackenzie, Mackay, and the two Indian hunters left the canoe to proceed without them while they climbed a mountain on the east bank in the hope of obtaining a view of the interior. The canoe was to proceed with all possible diligence, and Mackenzie and his party were to follow along the shore. After reaching the summit Mackenzie found the view so obstructed by thick woods that he could see little until he climbed to the top of a tall tree. Thence he could see two long snowy mountain ridges and between them a gap through which the river issued. Descending the mountain, the party hurried onward to get in touch with the canoe. After a long walk they struck the river and fired two shots but received no answer. Mackenzie believed that the canoe must be ahead, the Indians thought otherwise. The party walked onward and, after crossing a point of land, came again upon the river bank. Again they fired shots, again there was no answer. Here Mackenzie left Mackay and one of the Indians to build a huge fire and to send branches of trees afloat as signals to the crew if they were below. With the other Indian Mackenzie crossed another long point, where the river made a big bend, and on reaching the river once more fired their pieces. The echoes died away among the spruce-covered hills, but there was no response. The only living things in sight were thick swarms of gnats and mosquitoes, which, warmed by the midday sun, fell voraciously upon the explorers.

Mackenzie rejoined Mackay in a state of great anxiety. Having once myself been separated from my canoe and

companions under similar circumstances in an unexplored region hundreds of miles from any human habitations, I readily understand his emotions. Perhaps his followers, weary of the long journey, had turned back and had left him and his three companions alone in the wilderness. The two Indians were certain that the canoe had sunk with all on board and began to plan how they could build a raft on which to return. To add still further to their discomfort they were totally without food, though, as Mackenzie remarks, they had an abundance of water. The explorer bitterly reproached himself for having parted from the canoe in such a place.

Late in the afternoon Mackay and one of the Indians set off down the river, and after a long interval the sound of distant shots conveyed to Mackenzie the joyful news that the canoe had been found. Worn-out and drenched with rain, Mackenzie made his way downstream, but he confesses that these inconveniences affected him little "when I saw myself surrounded with my own people." The crew explained that the canoe had been damaged, and they had been forced to repair it. Mackenzie suspected that they had been loafing, but he deemed it wise to pretend to believe their story and "even to comfort each of them with a consolatory dram."

Had Mackenzie known the country, he would, after ascending the Parsnip about ninety miles, have turned up a tributary now called Pack River, which enters the main stream from the west. By following this he would have reached what is now known as McLeod Lake and could have ascended what is now called Crooked River to its source in Summit Lake, whence a portage of eight miles would have brought him to the Fraser River. But his only information had been derived from the old Indian

who had told him vaguely that by following the stream he was on to its headwaters he would be able to make a portage across to another river. Therefore, he continued to follow the main Parsnip, hoping each day to meet with savages who would give him information. Repeatedly the explorers saw old encampments and other signs which proved that the region was inhabited, but it was not until the ninth day on the Parsnip that they smelled smoke and on going a little farther saw some natives in the woods.

The party was a small one, and all except two warriors at once fled into the forest. These two stood on a little eminence, brandishing their spears and bows, and yelling defiance. After a long parley, however, the natives were convinced that the explorers came with peaceful intentions, and they recalled their fugitive families from the woods. Mackenzie pleased them with gifts of beads and other trifles and eagerly inquired of the great river to westward of which he had heard. Much to his chagrin they answered that the only large river in that direction was one which was a branch of the stream they were now on—doubtless Crooked River of to-day. But as the interpreter was able to communicate with them only imperfectly Mackenzie did not altogether despair and renewed his inquiries the next day. Again the explorer was disappointed, but finally one of the natives stated that he knew of a great river to southward which ran toward the midday sun, and that a branch of it ran near the headwaters of the stream they were on. He stated that the inhabitants along its banks built houses, lived on islands, and were numerous and warlike, but he denied that the river emptied into the sea. Mackenzie, his spirits soaring at the welcome information, imputed the

man's opinion that the river did not run into the sea "to his ignorance of the country."

By the use of presents Mackenzie persuaded one of the Indians to guide him to the portage, which they reached in two days' time. The stream they had been following ended in a small lake. A carry of about eight hundred paces over a divide brought them to another small lake, the outlet of which flowed in the direction they wished to go, but it was too much obstructed with fallen trees to be navigable. Another portage of one hundred and seventy-five paces brought them to a third lake, from which they passed into a small river. This stream was soon increased in size by many small streams which came cascading down the mountain-sides from the melting snows above. But fallen trees, jagged rocks, and rapids rendered navigation highly perilous. To-day this stream is called Bad River. The second day on this river began with a serious adventure.

"We accordingly pushed off," says Mackenzie, "and had proceeded but a short way when the canoe struck, and notwithstanding all our exertions the violence of the current was so great as to drive her sideways down the river and break her on the first bar, when I instantly jumped into the water, and the men followed my example; but before we could set her straight or stop her we came to deeper water so that we were obliged to reëmbark with the utmost precipitation. One of the men who was not sufficiently active was left to get on shore in the best manner in his power. We had hardly regained our situations when we drove against a rock which shattered the stern of the canoe in such a manner that it held only by the gunwales so that the steersman could no longer keep his place. The violence of this stroke drove us to the

opposite side of the river, which is but narrow, when the bow met with the same fate as the stern. At this moment the foreman seized some branches of a small tree in the hope of bringing up the canoe, but such was their elasticity that, in a manner not easily described, he was jerked on shore in an instant and with a degree of violence that threatened his destruction. But we had no time to turn from our own situation to inquire what had befallen him; for, in a few momens, we came across a cascade which broke several large holes in the bottom of the canoe and started all the bars except one behind the scooping seat. If this accident, however, had not happened the vessel must have been irretrievably overset. The wreck becoming flat on the water we all jumped out, while the steersman, who had been compelled to abandon his place and had not recovered from his fright, called out to his companions to save themselves. My peremptory commands superseded the effects of his fear, and they all held fast to the wreck; to which fortunate resolution we owed our safety, as we should otherwise have been dashed against the rocks by the force of the water or driven over the cascades. In this condition we were forced several hundred yards, and every yard on the verge of destruction; but at length we most fortunately arrived in a small eddy, where we were enabled to make a stand, from the weight of the canoe resting on the stones rather than from any exertions of our exhausted strength. For though our efforts were short, they were pushed to the utmost, as life or death depended on them."

Benumbed from their bath in the icy water, the party at last reached the bank, and were there joined by the two men who had been forced to quit the craft. The canoe was a wreck, and all the bullets had been lost, but the

powder had received no damage, and the shot remained and from it bullets could be made. No one had been seriously injured, and a fire and a dram of rum raised the spirits of all. Some of the men, however, wished to turn back, and it required all of Mackenzie's authority and eloquence to persuade them to persevere in the hazardous journey.

The canoe was repaired, and for four days the explorers made their painful way onward. Mosquitoes and black flies besieged them in clouds, and the river was so bad that most of the time they were forced to carry their canoe and baggage through a tangle of woods and swamps. Their guide deserted them one night and was not seen again, but finally late in the evening of the 17th of June, weary and worn, the explorers emerged from the forest upon the bank of a large river—the north fork of what is now called the Fraser River.

And now for some time they were able to take things easily. Leisurely drifting and paddling with the current, they reached next day the south, or main, fork; here the combined stream was about half a mile wide. On the second day on this river they portaged around what is now called Giscome Rapids, some miles above the present town of Prince George, and the same day saw a party of Indians, who fled into the woods on seeing them. Next day they came upon a larger party, the warriors of which displayed great fury and let fly a flight of arrows, most of which fell short while others passed over the canoe. Luckily Mackenzie's Indians understood the language, and after long-range negotiations amicable relations were established. These Indians said that the river ran toward the midday sun, that white men were reported to be building houses around its mouth, but that

there were three places where the stream was altogether impassable because of falls and rapids.

Accompanied by two of these natives, the explorers continued their journey down the river. From Indians farther down Mackenzie heard such a discouraging account of the river ahead that on June 23d he decided to return upstream to a point where the Indians told him it was possible to make a portage to a stream that emptied into the Great Water.

Now, however, difficulties multiplied. The unexpected return of the white men combined with other circumstances to alarm the Indians whose camps Mackenzie had already passed. They adopted a hostile demeanor and fled to the woods. Even the guide who had promised to show them the way across the portage disappeared. Mackenzie's followers became panic-stricken and were eager to start for home. More than once he feared they would break out in open mutiny. However, he managed to keep them in hand, and some days were spent in building a new canoe to replace the old, which was little more than a wreck. On the 29th of June Mackenzie's heart was rejoiced by the return of the guide, who explained that he had been employed in searching for his family, who had been seized with panic and had fled on hearing the false reports about the hostile designs of the white men.

The explorers now built a cache of logs in which they placed many of their belongings, and they put their canoe upon a stage. Some pemmican, wild rice, corn, and a small keg of gunpowder they hid in the ground, rolled up in oilcloth and dressed leather. The rest of their belongings they carried with them.

For two weeks they traveled westward through a rough country, forced to subsist on scanty rations, and often

drenched by rains. From time to time they met small bands of Indians, from among whom they engaged new guides. Finally they climbed a range of mountains so high that the pass through which they traveled was covered with snow. Having surmounted this barrier they descended into a valley and on the 17th of July reached a navigable river flowing westward.

An Indian village stood upon the bank, and, as it was already dark, the inhabitants had no warning of the approach of the white men. The people were inside their huts cooking fish over small fires. Without ceremony Mackenzie walked into one of the huts, threw down his burden, shook hands with some of the people, and sat down upon his pack. The inmates showed little surprise but soon made signs for him to go to a large house that was built upon posts some distance above the ground. He climbed into this house by a rude sort of ladder and after passing three fires in the middle of the building he came upon a group of Indians seated on a very wide board. Among these people he noticed one of his guides. Soon the rest of Mackenzie's party entered, and all were given seats. One of the Indians then brought a quantity of roasted salmon for their use. Later the white men were invited to sleep in the building, but Mackenzie preferred to camp outside. A large fire was built, and the Indians brought boards, so that their guests need not sleep on the bare ground. Two large dishes of cooked salmon roes were then brought for their further delectation. Next morning they were treated to gooseberries, whortleberries, raspberries, dried roes, and roasted salmon.

The Indians at this village were, in fact, more provident than was customary among the American aborigines.

With great labor they had built a weir across the river, and in an opening in the center they placed their machines for catching fish. Salmon were, it was clear, the staff of life to this people, as they were to almost all Indians living along streams emptying into the Pacific along the northwest coast.

For several days the explorers descended the river, part of the time walking along its banks, part of the time riding in canoes obtained from Indians met with along the way. Even on the Fraser Mackenzie had seen a knife and other articles that had evidently been obtained from white men. Such articles now became more and more common. One chieftain, for example, showed the explorer a blue cloth garment decorated with brass buttons and another of flowered cotton trimmed with a leather fringe. The same chief stated that ten winters before he had seen two large vessels on the Big Water, and Mackenzie supposed that they were probably the ships commanded by Captain Cook. The gunwales of the big dugout canoe in which the chief had traveled on that occasion were inlaid with the teeth of the sea-otter.

Finally late in the afternoon of the 18th of July Mackenzie came at last in sight of his goal—an arm of the sea. He was still a long distance from the open ocean, but the tide rose and fell fifteen feet, and porpoises and seals were almost constantly in sight. The spot was not far from the present town of Bella Coola, and the stream they had descended was the Bella Coola River.

For three days the explorers paddled about in a maze of inlets and channels. Food was scarce, and the Indians seen were inclined to be disagreeable. One insolent fellow constantly harped upon the fact that he had been

shot at by white men on a ship and had been struck by one of them with the flat of a sword. Mackenzie kept his men constantly on guard, and to these precautions the party probably owed their safety. Having taken observations for longitude and latitude, Mackenzie mixed some vermilion in melted grease and on the face of a great rock wrote:

"ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, FROM CANADA, BY LAND, THE TWENTY-SECOND OF JULY, 1793."

The same day they set out on the return and reached the mouth of the river by which they had come. They disembarked and made their way by land toward an Indian village. Mackenzie and the Indian guide preceded the others, and when the two neared the village, several armed warriors ran toward them as if with hostile intent. Among them was the fellow who had said so often that he had been shot at by white men. Mackenzie at first raised his gun and brought them to a halt; then let it fall into his left hand and drew his hanger. The Indians pressed forward, and one of them contrived to get behind the explorer and to seize him in his arms. Mackenzie soon wrenched himself free, but was never able to understand why the warrior did not avail himself of the chance to plunge his dagger into the white man's body. Mackenzie's followers now began to appear, whereupon the Indians fled to the village, taking with them Mackenzie's hat and cloak. Knowing that some of the Indians in the village had stolen some of his belongings a few days before, Mackenzie determined to teach the savages a lesson. Marching to the village, he demanded the return of all the stolen articles. Awed by the prospect of a fight with the white men, the Indians complied.

Many days of toilsome effort brought the explorers back to their canoe and cache, where they found all safe. A week of paddling, poling, and tracking, with a few portages, and they arrived at Bad River, in ascending which they were forced to work hard on scanty rations. Finally on the 17th of July they once more embarked on the headwaters of Parsnip River. Thenceforth they had the current to aid them, and a few days of comparatively easy work brought them to the Rocky Mountain portage. There they were lucky enough to kill a buffalo and two elk, and from then on they lived on the fat of the land. Finally on August 24 they reached the post from which they had started so many weeks before.

Thus ended an expedition fully as remarkable as that to the Arctic. For the first time the Continent had been crossed by white men. Vast regions had been opened up to the knowledge of the civilized world. Mackenzie's exploit preceded by a decade that of Lewis and Clark. The natural obstacles overcome by him were fully as difficult, and his means much less.

Mackenzie subsequently acquired a fortune in the fur trade. In 1801 he published an account of his two expeditions, and for his services he was knighted by the king. He ultimately settled down upon an estate in his native Scotland and died in 1820.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FUR TRADING ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER HENRY

Of all the fur traders who wandered over the Northwest, Alexander Henry the Younger, nephew of the Alexander Henry whose adventures have already been mentioned, has left us the most complete record of the daily life of those who followed his occupation. For a period of about fifteen years, from 1799 to 1814, he kept a voluminous diary of his experiences, the scenes of which ranged from Lake Superior to the Pacific. Over eighty years later this diary, in condensed form, was edited and given to the world by Dr. Elliott Coues, a distinguished student of western history.

In 1799 Henry engaged in a trading venture in what is now Manitoba and made a clear profit of about $3,500 on less than two canoe loads of goods. The next year, as an agent of the Northwest Company, he set out from Grand Portage on Lake Superior and followed the Rainy River and Lake of the Woods route westward. Each of his brigade of canoes contained twenty-eight packs, and included tobacco, guns, powder and lead, and ten kegs of high wine, that is, brandy. The food for the canoemen consisted of six bushels of corn and half a keg of grease for every four men, besides what fish or game could be caught or killed.

There were many rapids and portages along the way. To avoid the labor of making what was known as the Portage d'Isle, the crew of one canoe tried to shoot the

rapids. They had not gone far when the bowman made a mistake, with the result that the bow struck a rock on shore, and the current whirled the canoe around. Both the bowman and steersman managed to leap upon the rock, but the midman was not active enough to do so and remained in the canoe, which was instantly carried out into the wild water. For a moment she stood on end and then disappeared. The man clung to a bale of goods that had been washed overboard, and those on shore made every effort to aid him, but in vain. A heavy swell swept him off the bale, and he disappeared. The canoe, in badly damaged condition, and some of the goods were recovered, but the man was never seen again.

On August 16th the voyageurs reached Lake Winnipeg, and the same day were almost wrecked by a storm. Ducks were very plentiful, and Henry killed a number, also a white pelican. The beach was covered with dead grasshoppers, or Rocky Mountain locusts; they formed a continuous line along the edge of the water as far as the eye could reach, and in places were from six to nine inches deep.

With a score of voyageur helpers and their Indian wives and children and a considerable number of Ojibwas, Henry ascended the Red River of the North and established a post not far from the mouth of Park River in what is now North Dakota. The region round about was parklike, with alternate patches of wood and open prairie, and the whole country swarmed with game. It was Henry's plan to have the Indians and some of the voyageurs hunt and trap during the winter. As there was great danger from the Sioux, who were almost constantly at war with the Ojibwas, he surrounded his buildings with a high stockade of logs.

On the way thither the party saw many buffaloes, and Henry was astonished at their number. At one place, "the beach, once a soft black mud into which a man would sink knee-deep, is now made hard as pavement by the numerous herds coming to drink. The willows are entirely trampled and torn to pieces; even the bark of the smaller trees is rubbed off in many places. The grass on the first bank of the river is entirely worn away. Numerous paths, some of which are a foot deep in the hard turf, come from the plains to the brink of the river, and the vast quantity of dung gives this place the appearance of a cattle yard."

From this place Henry went on his first buffalo hunt. With a voyageur named Desmarais he rode about a mile from the river and discovered an animal lying in the grass. They dismounted and crept forward to within thirty paces. It was a big bull, and Henry whispered to Desmarais, who was an old hunter, to fire at the animal, but the voyageur objected, saying that a buffalo could rarely be killed when in that posture. He suggested that Henry start the bull with a shot and said that he would then kill the animal. Henry was carrying what was for that day a powerful double-barreled gun, and with it he aimed as best he could for the heart. When he fired, the bull stretched out his neck, legs, and tail, and instantly expired—to Henry's great satisfaction and the chagrin of Desmarais.

"Having plenty of meat in the camp," says Henry, "we took only the tongue, leaving the animal for the wolves and crows, of which we saw many hovering around. Just as we mounted we perceived a large herd of cows to the southward, moving down to the river to drink. We rode toward them, and having got under the

bank, which was scarcely high enough to conceal us, we kept on through the woods at full speed, in hopes of intercepting them. But in this we failed; we found they had drunk and returned to the meadows. No time was to be lost; we rode after them at full speed through the woods which line the river. I was so anxious to overtake them that I did not take proper care to avoid the trees, and suddenly my right breast struck full upon the point of an oak limb as thick as my wrist. Fortunately for me it broke off. I had not time to examine the wound, but cleared the woods and sighted the buffaloes, not more than one hundred paces off. We gave our horses the rein, and were soon up with the herd. The dust they raised almost blinded us, having the wind ahead. My horse was none of the best hunters; he was fleet, but timid in closing up with buffaloes. I could only get a long shot, which fortunately knocked over a bull. I looked round for my companion and saw him still near the river, whipping his stubborn horse, which would not pursue the buffalo. I now examined my wound, when I found the limb had gone through my jacket, vest, and shirt, and penetrated the flesh half an inch, just below the right nipple. Desmarais having joined me, we took the tongue of the animal only, although he was tolerably fat, left him for the wolves to devour, and started homeward. On our way we killed two more bulls."

Henry's Journal is full of other references to the vast number of the buffaloes. In one place he tells of many miring down in the mud and dying. In another he relates how whole herds of the animals broke through the ice of Red River and for two days and nights their dead bodies "formed one continuous line in the current." Thousands grounded along the bank, and the stench from

their bodies was so strong that at times Henry was unable to eat his meals. The Indians told him that every spring it was "about the same."

Fresh buffalo meat, fat, dried tongues, and pemmican formed the main support of both Indians and traders, and great numbers of the animals were killed for that purpose. But the instinct for killing sometimes led both Whites and Reds to engage in useless slaughter. Once, for example, Henry and about a score of Indians and voyageurs amused themselves by lying in wait under the river bank and shooting at the animals when they came down to drink. "When the poor brutes," he writes, "came to within about ten yards of us, on a sudden we would fire a volley of twenty-nine guns at them, killing and wounding many, of which we only took the tongues. The Indians suggested that we should all fire together at one lone bull which appeared, to have the satisfaction, as they said, of killing him stone dead. The beast advanced until he was within six or eight paces, when the yell was given and all hands let fly; but instead of falling he galloped off, and it was only after several more discharges that he was brought to the ground. The Indians enjoyed this sport highly—it is true the ammunition cost them nothing."

Often the herds passed close to the fort. Once a cow actually entered it and was shot at the foot of Henry's gallery. Another time a herd of cows were crossing the river on the ice nearby, and the dogs prevented one animal from getting ashore. Some of the men took line[illegible] entangled her legs, after which they fastened a lin[illegible] her horns and dragged her into the fort. Suddenl[illegible] ever, she jumped up and charged at the dogs. the men leaped upon her back, "but this did no

mode her; she was as nimble in jumping and kicking at the dogs as before, although they are two stout men—Crow weighing at least one hundred and ninety pounds."

Henry relates that one spring day he killed four buffalo calves and brought two calves home alive. They no sooner lost sight of the herd than they followed his horse like dogs, right into the fort. On chasing a herd at that season of the year the calves would run until exhausted and would then throw themselves down in the high grass and lie still, hiding their heads if possible. When the hunter came upon them, they would start to run, but, seeing only the man and his horse, would stop and allow themselves to be taken. If not discovered, they would lie still until their mothers returned in search of them. As Henry was butchering one of the calves he had killed that day, he heard something running toward him, and on looking up saw a large cow running directly at him. He had only just time to catch up his gun and fire without taking proper aim, but he wounded her slightly, and she made off. More than once Henry had even narrower escapes, and his Journal is full of exciting hunting experiences.

Elk, black bears, coyotes, and timber wolves were common, and the much dreaded grizzly was occasionally met with. The dogs belonging to the post occasionally mated with wolves, though more often they fought them. Henry's Journal for 1800 tells of the killing of a grizzly about a mile from the fort, and this reference possesses much zoological interest, for the grizzly was rarely found so far east. Sturgeon, pike, and many other kinds of fish could be taken from the river in great numbers. So it was not often that the traders and their red friends ed fo t posts where he was later stationed

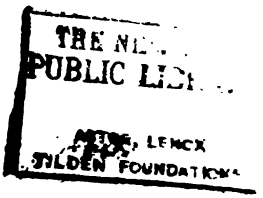
Henry added to his supplies by raising vegetables, especially potatoes, which produced heavy yields.

So long as he remained in the Red River region Henry and those about him lived in constant dread of the warlike Sioux. There were repeated false alarms, some of them of a ludicrous character, when the real truth became known. Finally, however, the Sioux actually came.

In August, 1805, while stationed at a post where Pembina River joins Red River, Henry received the unwelcome news that the enemy had surprised a camp of his Indians on Tongue River, a stream not far from the fort, and had killed or carried off fourteen persons. The first person killed was a brave named Liard, whose daughter Henry had married—as was the common custom among fur traders of that day. Liard had climbed a tree to look for buffalo and had no sooner reached the top when two Sioux fired at him. Both balls passed through his body. He had just strength enough to cry out to his family, who were in a lodge about a hundred yards away: "Save yourselves! the Sioux are killing us!" He then fell dead to the ground, his body breaking several branches of the tree as it fell.

The noise brought the other Ojibwas out of their lodges, when, recognizing the danger, the women and children instantly ran toward a large woods on Tongue River, about a mile distant and in the direction of the fort. The four surviving Ojibwas warriors seized their arms and made off also, but kept in the rear of the women and children to protect them. It was not long before the main war party came dashing down on horseback, whooping and yelling diabolically. The four warriors, firing carefully, held them off until some of the

Indian Tepees on the Great Plains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fugitives had entered the wood, but then the enemy surrounded them. Three of the Ojibwas warriors fled, but two of them were slain. The fourth, a brave fellow named Aceguemanche, or Little Chief, waited deliberately until the Sioux were very near, when he fired at their chief and knocked him off his pony. Three young girls and a boy were taken prisoners; several other fugitives were slain upon the spot, including Little Chief.

Several squaws and children took refuge in the woods, where the willows and other brush were so thick that every one escaped. A boy of twelve, closely pursued, crawled into a hollow under a bunch of willows, and a Sioux leaped his horse over it without perceiving the scared little lad.

One of the little girls told a pitiful story of the fate that befell Liard's squaw, who was Henry's mother-in-law. She had two young children who could not run fast enough, so she took one upon her back and prevailed upon her sister-in-law to carry the other. But when the Sioux swooped down upon them with hideous yells, the sister-in-law threw down the child in her terror and soon caught up with the mother, who was ahead. Seeing that the child was missing and hearing its screams, the brave mother kissed her little daughter—the one who related the story—and said with tears streaming from her eyes: "Take courage, my daughter! try to reach the woods—and if you do, go to your eldest sister, who will be kind to you; I must turn back and save your younger sister, or die in the attempt—take courage—run fast, my daughter!" The poor mother actually did recover the child and was running off with both children, when she was felled to the ground by a blow on the head with a war club. She sprang up instantly, drew her knife, and

plunged it into the neck of her assailant, but other Sioux coming up, she was slain.

Henry was absent from the fort when the news of the massacre arrived, but some of his employees and a party of Ojibwas visited the scene of the massacre. All the dead had been mutilated in a horrible manner, and the skull of brave Little Chief had been carried off for use as a water dish. A war party set out in pursuit of the Sioux but quarreled among themselves, and the massacre was not avenged.

In July four years later the Sioux even ventured an attack upon the fort itself. At the time there were over a score of friendly warriors, about fifty squaws, and many children camped on the slope between the fort and the river. In the fort Henry had eight assistants. The Indians had been having a grand drinking bout and were in a badly demoralized condition, while, to prevent them from injuring each other, Henry had collected all their guns and taken them into the fort.

At midnight there was a sudden discharge of firearms from out in the darkness, accompanied by the blood-curdling warwhoop. Several bullets pierced the lodges, but no one was hit. Instantly the Ojibwas sprang to their feet and rushed for the fort, in order to obtain their guns. As the gates were locked, the warriors climbed over the stockade and hurried to Henry's house, where they snatched up their guns and then ran to the gates, which had then been opened. Through them poured the frightened squaws, with their children and whatever possessions they had been able to catch up in the darkness. Two families who were encamped on the opposite side of the river jumped into a boat and also made their way to safety. In a very short time all the friendly

Indians were inside the fort. Incredible as it may seem, not one of the Indians had been hit; the only loss was that of an unlucky dog, which was hit in the head by two bullets, as he was in the act of jumping into the boat to cross the river.

From out in the darkness Henry could hear the Sioux haranguing each other. He pointed a coehorn, a kind of small cannon, loaded with a pound of powder and thirty balls, in the direction of the voices, and one of his men applied the match. Says Henry: "The balls clattered among the large trees across the little river, and the noise of the discharge must have appeared awful to people who had never heard anything of the kind before. My Indians hoped to find a good round number of the enemy dead, as they said they heard the Sioux lamenting their fallen relations. Everything was quiet for some time, till we again heard the enemy haranguing; but they had withdrawn to a greater distance. I once more loaded my coehorn: and, pointing it as nearly as possible to the spot where we heard them, fired a second shot. This caused them apparently to withdraw still further, as we heard no more of them during the night."

The sound of the thunder gun was evidently too much for the Sioux, for next morning they were seen riding off down Red River. The whites and their allies found a whip on the handle of which there was fresh blood, but they found no dead, and it is probable that no one on either side was killed during the raid. Several parties of friendly Indians, half-breeds, and whites who were not in the fort had miraculous escapes from meeting the hostiles. Henry and some Indian scouts found the spot where the enemy had made ready for the attack. It was about a mile and a half from the fort, and from it the

enemy could in the daytime watch the blockhouses and stockades.

"Here," says Henry, "we found upward of one hundred pairs of old shoes, some scalps, remnants of leather and buffalo-skins, saddle-cloths made of buffalo robes, whips, pieces of old saddles, rolls of bark containing war-caps, bark and willow dishes, also, paunches and bladders of water for a journey. Upward of one hundred willows, about six feet long, with a fork about the middle, were stripped of their bark, and stuck in the ground. This, I am told, is for the purpose of hanging up their war-caps before attacking an enemy. We also observed some places where they had seated themselves in the long grass by twos, threes, and fours, to adjust their war-dresses. At every seat we found a quantity of swan's down, colored with red earth, under which we found from one to four small stones, about the size of an egg, also daubed over with red earth; and nearby were stuck in the ground the same number of willows, about two feet long, stripped of their bark, and daubed with the same red earth. Such a place is called by the Indians 'the spot of the last sacrifice,' as it is here that they adjust themselves for battle, and generally make a sacrifice of different articles they have brought with them for that purpose, to insure the protection of the Supreme Being, or, as they term him, the Master of Life."

It was with such ceremonials as these that the barbarians of the northwestern plains made ready to go out and murder their fellow-men!

Henry experienced infinitely more trouble with the Indians with whom he traded than from the hostile Sioux. Most of them were a licentious, begging, untrustworthy lot, and to their natural weaknesses had been

added an overpowering craving for the white man's firewater. Liquor had come to be the one article they held in most esteem, and even the traders who deplored the traffic were forced to supply the want or else be ruined. Kegs of rum, whiskey, high wine (that is, brandy), and other liquors formed part of the cargo of every brigade of canoes that traveled westward from Lake Superior.

The liquor was sold to the Indians in diluted form. Those living nearest civilization, having the more educated tastes, demanded the strongest mixture; those in the more remote regions were satisfied with a much weaker compound. The Ojibwas, who had had long experience with the white man's firewater, did not consider the mixture strong enough unless eight or nine quarts of brandy were used in making a nine-gallon keg of drink. For the Crees and Assiniboines, who were less experienced, six quarts to the keg were sufficient. For the Blackfeet, to whom strong drink was a new delight, the traders of Henry's day were accustomed to put only four or five quarts in the keg. Generally speaking, the Indians were much more easily overcome by intoxicants than white men; only a small quantity of alcohol was required to make one of them drunk.

Their fondness for firewater was so great that they would barter their horses, arms, clothing, or even their wives and children to obtain it. Henry relates that on one occasion a brave offered to sell him his nine-year-old daughter for a small quantity of the drink.

Henry's Journal is full of decriptions of violent scenes which were the direct result of the use of liquor. For example, he records on March 14, 1802, that "In a drinking match at the Hills yesterday, Gros Bras in a fit of jealousy stabbed Aupusoi to death with a hand-dague;

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the first stroke opened his left side, the second his belly, and the third his breast; he never stirred, although he had a knife in his belt, and died instantly. Soon after this Aupusoi's brother, a boy about ten years of age, took the deceased's gun, loaded it with two balls, and approached Gros Bras' tent. Putting the muzzle of the gun through the door the boy fired the two balls into his breast and killed him dead, just as he was reproaching his wife for her affection for Aupusoi, and boasting of the revenge he had taken. The little fellow ran into the woods and hid. Little Shell found the old woman, Aupusoi's mother, in her tent; he instantly stabbed her. Ondainoiache then came in, took the knife, and gave her a second stab. Little Shell, in his turn taking the knife, gave a third blow. In this manner did these two rascals continue to murder the old woman, as long as there was any life in her. The boy escaped into Langlois' house, and was kept hid until they were all sober. Next morning a hole was dug in the ground, and all three were buried together."

Henry mentions dozens of other drinking affrays that had fatal results. Drink had the effect of changing many of the Indians into veritable demons. Henry tells of one Indian who "was so troublesome that we had to tie him with ropes to prevent his doing mischef. He was stabbed in the back in three different places about a month ago. His wounds were still open, and had an ugly appearance; in his struggling to get loose they burst out afresh and bled a great deal. We had much trouble to stop the blood, as the fellow was insensible to pain or danger; his only aim was to bite us. We had some narrow escapes, until we secured his mouth, and then he fell asleep."

Occasionally these drinking affrays had an amusing side. Thus at the Red River post there was an old

Indian who was called by the whites Crooked Legs. He had two wives, one an aged hag, the other a buxom young squaw, who despised him. One day when all were drunk Crooked Legs began to accuse the young squaw of infidelity, whereupon she caught up a long stick and hit him a blow over the head that laid him senseless. She then ran off and hid in another lodge. On recovering his senses the old man took his knife, found her, and began to stab her. He would have made an end of her then and there had not some of the other squaws disarmed him. As it was, he gave her three bad wounds, from one of which the blood gushed out from her lung. On examining the wounds Henry thought the woman would surely die. As for Crooked Legs, he took refuge in his own tent, singing and saying he was not afraid to die. Some of the Indians, even his own son, wished to kill him, and Henry had much difficulty in preventing them from doing so.

Next day the wounded squaw was able to walk about, while her husband, now sober, was very sorry for her. As he was skilled in the treatment of wounds, he set about curing her. She, however, cast "cruel frowns upon the old gentleman," and when he would be dressing her wounds would say in reply to tender remarks on his part: "Get out, you old dog! If I live, it will be the worse for you."

In the course of a few weeks she completely recovered and took advantage of another drinking match to be revenged. She gave her husband a terrific beating with a stick, and then, throwing him upon his back, proceeded to burn him with a firebrand. Other Indians interfered presently and took her away, but not before she had reduced him to a shocking condition. Henry records in

his Journal for the next day: "Crooked Legs too ill to stir; his old wife waits on him, and the young one makes fun of him." A few days later Crooked Legs and his old wife left the post. "The old gent was," says Henry, "in a sad condition, and appeared to be failing fast. I had him dragged away on a travaille with my horse."

Before beginning a drinking bout the Indians would sometimes put away all their arms, well aware that they might make murderous use of them otherwise. At times the traders would themselves attend to the disarming. But in their orgies the maddened creatures would improvise weapons, or would employ the weapons with which nature had endowed them. Henry makes frequent mention of Indians who had their noses or ears bitten off in these drinking bouts.

Another writer says of such scenes: "To see a house full of drunken Indians, consisting of men, women, and children, is a most unpleasant sight; for, in that condition, they often wrangle, pull each other by the hair, and fight. At some times, ten or twelve, of both sexes, may be seen, fighting each other promiscuously, until at last they all fall on the floor, one upon another, some spilling rum out of a small kettle or dish, which they hold in their hands, while others are throwing up what they have just drunk. To add to this uproar, a number of children, some on their mothers' shoulders, and others running about and taking hold of their clothes, are constantly bawling, the elder ones, through fear that their parents may be stabbed, or that some other misfortune may befall them in the fray. These shrieks of the children form a very unpleasant chorus to the brutal noise kept up by the parents, who are engaged in the squabble."

The drunken Indians were usually so troublesome that

the traders were at their wits' end to manage them, and many deadly affrays were the direct result of drink. Some traders made use of laudanum to put the quarrelsome to sleep. In at least one instance the dose was made too large, and death resulted. Sir Alexander Mackenzie says of this case: "Most of them who passed the winter on the Saskathiwine, got to the Eagle Hills, where, in the spring of 1780, a few days previous to their intended departure, a large band of Indians being engaged in drinking about their houses, one of the traders, to ease himself of the troublesome importunities of a native, gave him a dose of laudanum in a glass of grog, which effectually prevented him from giving further trouble to any one, by setting him asleep forever. This accident produced a fray, in which one of the traders, and several of the men, were killed, while the rest had no other means to save themselves but by a precipitate flight."

Henry was not a man of much humanity of feeling. His main concern was to get furs at the cheapest price. His opinion of the Indians was a very low one. But occasionally a gleam of higher feelings appears in his pages, and he laments the use made of liquor in the Indian trade. For example, his entry for one day was as follows:

"In the evening we were surprised by hearing three reports of a gun. Old Fallewine soon arrived, and bawled out at a distance, as soon as he thought we could hear him, that five Indians had been murdered near Portage la Prairie since I passed there, relations of himself and some others who camped here. This firing was the usual signal of death in carrying news from one camp to another. But the Indians totally neglect their ancient customs; and to what can this degeneracy be ascribed but

to their intercourse with us, particularly as they are so unfortunate as to have a continual succession of opposition parties to teach them roguery and destroy both body and mind with that pernicious article, rum? What a different set of people they would be, were there not a drop of liquor in the country! If a murder is committed among the Saulteurs [Ojibwas], it is always in a drinking match. We may truly say that liquor is the root of all evil in the Northwest. Great bawling and lamentation went on, and I was troubled most of the night for liquor to wash away grief."

Among the Ojibwas who visited Henry's post on Red River was a young Indian named Berdash. He was considered effeminate in his ways, but was the swiftest runner of his tribe, and some years before had had a remarkable adventure that tested both his speed and courage. A fur trader named Reaume attempted to make peace between the Ojibwas and Sioux, and Berdash accompanied a party of his tribesmen to the Sioux camp. They at first appeared reconciled to each other through the intercession of the whites, but as the Saulteurs, who were mostly unarmed, were returning home, the Sioux pursued them. " Both parties were on foot, and the Sioux have the name of being extraordinarily swift. The Saulteurs imprudently dispersed in the plains, and several were killed; but the party with Berdash escaped without any accident, in the following manner: One of them had got from the Sioux a bow but only a few arrows. On starting and finding themselves pursued, they ran a considerable distance, until they perceived the Sioux were gaining fast upon them, when Berdash took the bow and arrows from his comrades, and told them to run as fast as possible, without minding him, as he feared no danger. He then

faced the enemy and began to let fly his arrows. This checked their course, and they returned the compliment with interest, but it was so far off that only a chance arrow could have hurt him, as they had nearly spent their strength when they fell near him. His own arrows were soon expended, but he lost no time in gathering up those that fell near him, and thus he had a continual supply. Seeing his friends some distance ahead, and the Sioux moving to surround him, he turned and ran full speed to join his comrades, the Sioux after him. When the latter approached too near, Berdash again stopped and faced them with his bow and arrows, and kept them at bay. Thus did he continue to manœuver until they reached a spot of strong wood which the Sioux dared not enter."

Living for so many years as Henry did in a fur country it was inevitable that many curious trapping experiences should come to his attention. For example, he relates that one day a trapper named Laroque came to the Red River post bringing a skunk, a badger, and a large white wolf, "all three caught in the same trap at once, as he said. This we thought extraordinary—indeed, a falsehood—until he explained the affair. His trap was made in a hollow stump, in the center of which there was a deep hole in the ground. He found the wolf just caught, and still alive: he dispatched him, and on taking him out, noticed something stirring and making a noise in the hole in the ground. Upon looking in he perceived the badger, which he killed with a stick, and on pulling him out, smelled the horrid stench of the skunk, which was in one corner of the hole: he soon dispatched him also. From this the Indians all predicted some great misfortune, either to the person to whom the traps be-

longed, or to our fort. Some supposed the Sioux would destroy us all."

Henry's explanation of the incident was that the badger had chased the skunk into the hole and had in turn been pursued by the wolf. This explanation may or may not be the correct one.

"Some went racoon hunting, the weather being warm," says Henry under date of November 30, 1800. "They returned in the evening with seven, which they had found in one hollow tree. The size of this tree was enormous, having a hollow six feet in diameter, the rim or shell being two feet thick, including the bark. Racoon hunting is common here in the winter season. The hunter examines every hollow tree met with, and when he sees the fresh marks of the claws, he makes a hole with an ax, and thus opens the hollow space, in which he lights a fire to find out if there be any racoons within, as they often climb trees in the autumn, and, not finding them proper for the purpose, leave them and seek others. But if they be within, the smoke obliges them to ascend and put their heads out of the hole they entered. On observing this, the ax is applied to the tree; with the assistance of the fire, it is soon down, and the hunter stands ready to dispatch the animals whilst they are stunned by the fall. But sometimes they are so obstinate as to remain at the bottom of the hole, until they are suffocated or roasted to death.

"The bears, both grizzly and common black, which reside on Red River, take to hollow trees also, and are hunted by the Indians in the same manner as racoons. But the bears in the Hair Hills, and other elevated places, never take to the trees for their winter quarters. They reside in holes in the ground, in the most intricate

thicket they can find, generally under the roots of trees that have been torn up by the wind, or have otherwise fallen. These are more difficult to find, requiring good dogs that are naturally given to hunt bears. The reason why the bears differ so in the choice of their winter habitations is obvious. The low points along the river, where the woods principally grow, are every spring subject to overflow when the ice breaks up. The mud carried down with the current, and left on the banks, makes their dens uncomfortable. On the Hair Hills and other high lands, where the ground is free from inundation, the soft and sandy soil is not so cold as the stiff, black mud on the banks of the river, which appears to be made ground. Frequently, on digging holes in winter, we found the frost had penetrated the ground nearly four feet, like one solid body of ice, while in a high, dry, sandy soil, it seldom exceeds one foot in depth."

Henry had a very low opinion of the Indians in most matters but greatly admired their skill as hunters and trailers. He relates that in the autumn of 1799 he went hunting near the foot of Fort Dauphin Mountain with an Ojibwas. Soon they came upon the tracks of some elk, or, as Henry calls them, "red deer." They quickly discovered the band in a thicket of willows and poplars. Both fired, but the elk scattered and disappeared. The hunters pursued them, but without avail, as the country was unfavorable.

"We then returned," says Henry, "to the spot where we had fired, as the Indians suspected that we had wounded some of them. We searched to see if we could find any blood; on my part, I could find tracks, but no blood, nor any sign that an animal had been wounded. As the ground was beaten in every direction by animals,

it was only after a tedious search that he found where the buck had struck off. But no blood was seen until, passing through a thicket of willows, he observed a drop upon a leaf, and next a little more. He then began to examine more strictly, to find out in what part of the body the animal had been wounded; and judging by the height and other signs, he told me the wound must have been somewhere between the shoulder and neck. We advanced about a mile, but saw nothing of the deer, and no more blood. I was for giving up the chase; but he assured me the wound was mortal, and that if the animal should lie down he could not rise again. We proceeded two miles further, when, coming out upon a small open space, he told me the animal was at no great distance, and very probably in this meadow. We accordingly advanced a few yards, and there we found the deer lying at the last gasp. The wound was exactly as I had been told. The sagacity of the Saulteurs in tracing strong wood animals is astonishing. I have frequently witnessed occurrences of this nature; the bend of a leaf or blade of grass is enough to show the direction the game has taken. Their ability is of equally great service to war-parties, when they discover the footsteps of their enemies."

Henry had many serious disputes with individual Indians. Once a brave tried to stab the trader with Henry's own knife, whereupon Henry "gave him a cruel beating and bunged up both his eyes, so that he could not see for several days." The Indian vowed revenge, and Henry had to be constantly on his guard. Another time Henry "refused to give debt to Grande Gueule [Big Mouth] for a blanket, as I knew he already owed me more than he could pay; he is a notorious scoundrel. On leaving the house this morning, while I was standing at our door,

the fellow slipped the cover off his gun and fired at me; the ball struck one of the door-posts. He then loaded and fired a second shot, and made off with himself."

Early in July, 1806, Henry set out on horseback, accompanied by three other men, for a trip to the Mandan towns on the Missouri River. The weather was exceedingly hot, and the mosquitoes were terribly persistent in unwelcome attentions. One night at an Ojibwas village the squaws closed the openings of the cabins and then built a smudge fire inside; "but to no purpose; it only made matters worse by choking us with the bitter smoke. If we covered our heads, we were suffocated with heat; if we remained uncovered, we were choked with smoke and mosquitoes. I, therefore, thought best to get out of doors, but was then in danger of being trampled to death by the horses, which surrounded the cabins to enjoy the smudge." Next day the mosquitoes continued so troublesome that it was only with difficulty that the travelers, when fording streams, could prevent their horses "from throwing themselves down and rolling in the water to get rid of those cursed insects."

On July 8th they reached the Assiniboine River about ten miles above the present site of Winnipeg. "The uncommonly high water," says Henry, "obliged us to make a raft to transport our baggage and equipments to the N. side. One of our party, who could not swim, we placed upon the raft, and set adrift. William Henry and I, and the other man, took to the water upon our horses. William, supposing himself an expert swimmer, let go his horse, and nearly paid for his imprudence; a severe cramp took him in the feet, and it was with much difficulty he reached the shore. Having all three got over, we left our horses to feed, whilst we went down river in search

of the raft, which the strong current had carried much further than we supposed it would have done, and it was some time before we could reach it. This was very disagreeable. We were entirely naked, so that the mosquitoes had their pleasure with us, and having no shoes, it was only with great pain that we could walk in the sharp-pointed grass. We found the man on the raft waiting for us, and lost no time in dressing."

At his Company's post at the mouth of Mouse River Henry's party was increased to seven persons and eight horses. They were soon out upon the bald plains, where they were forced to use "buffalo chips" for fuel, and where they saw many "jumping deer," i.e., antelope. When far out upon the plains the antelope became so tame that the young ones, to satisfy their curiosity, would run up within a few yards of the travelers, while the mothers would also approach, though more cautiously. The travelers had no difficulty in killing plenty of fat bull buffaloes for meat, though fuel was so scarce that at times they were hardly able to cook the meat. Mosquitoes continued to be so bad that the horses were driven almost frantic. One night one of them broke his picket line and in jumping and prancing about came down upon the leg of the guide, inflicting a painful bruise. In course of time the travelers began to come to lakes, the water of which, though clear, was so full of alkali as to be totally undrinkable. The banks of some of these lakes were white as drifted snow. All along the way the party kept a sharp lookout for Indian horse-thieves, and their watchfulness increased as they entered the Missouri country, where there was danger of meeting the dreaded Sioux. Soon after coming in sight of the great river one of the party saw two buffalo bulls coming round a hill,

grazing as they moved along. This alarmed some of the men, who insisted that the bulls were horsemen approaching; two of the French Canadians even declared that they could see the riders whipping and kicking their horses, as was the Indian custom when riding at full speed. Henry himself could see that the moving objects were buffaloes and that what was supposed to be the riders' arms lashing away was the bulls' tails, which were kept in continual motion to drive away the flies. Nothing he could say could reassure the panic-stricken men, who believed that their last day had come. Finally, however, a spy-glass confirmed Henry's declarations. "Bravery," says he, "instantly appeared on the countenances of those who, a few moments before, had given themselves up for lost."

Next day they saw many ripe chokecherries, raspberries, and gooseberries, and passed many clusters of prickly pears. Several times they were in danger of falling into deep pits which the Indians had dug in the path to catch wolves and foxes in the winter time. Some of these pits were ten feet deep and hollowed out to a circumference of thirty feet, but the entrance was no wider than the footpath and about five feet in length. In the season when fur was prime the holes were covered with dry grass, and several animals would sometimes be caught in the pits in a single night. In the afternoon they drew near a Mandan village on the bank of the Missouri, and passed several fields of corn, beans, squashes, and sunflowers. Sunflowers, indeed, were growing wild in every direction. They also passed an Indian cemetery and saw great numbers of "dead exposed upon stages about eight feet from the ground. Many of the coverings, which are generally of dressed leather and

parchment, were still very good, whilst others were decayed, and nothing but the bones appeared; others, again, were decaying and falling to the ground as the stages went to pieces."

The Mandans, then one of the most important tribes of the Northwest, lived in settled villages and depended in large measure upon agriculture for a livelihood. They were generally friendly to white men, and the chief of the village, Le Chat (the Black Cat), welcomed Henry's party and gave them a hut to sleep in. "On going into the hut," says Henry, "we found buffalo hides spread on the ground before the fire for us to sit upon, and were presented with two large dishes of boiled corn and beans. After that they gave us a large dish of boiled dried meat; but few of us could eat of it, as it had too strong a taste and smell. This was just to their own palate, as they seldom eat meat until it begins to smell. We were invited into several huts successively and presented with dried meat in a state of corruption, corn and beans, together with parched corn and fresh ears pounded up in a wooden mortor; this last dish we found good."

At night the young men kept watch against enemies, and some walked about the village singing love songs to their favorite beauties. During the day, if no hunting party was to be undertaken, the young men spent their time on the tops of the huts, sleeping in the sun, or strolling from hut to hut, eating corn and smoking Missouri tobacco. Occasionally they had races, either on foot or on horseback, or practised warlike manœuvers. The women busied themselves performing household duties or hoeing in the fields. The hoes used were made of the shoulder blades of buffaloes fastened to a crooked stick. One of the tasks of the women was to pound up

corn in mortars made for that purpose. In this village Henry saw the remains of an excellent corn mill which the celebrated explorers Lewis and Clark had left there two years before. The foolish Indians had broken it up to make barbs for arrows; the largest piece, which they had been unable to break up, they had fixed to a wooden handle and used to pound marrow-bones to make grease.

After a short stay at the first village Henry's party crossed the Missouri to another. The horses were made to swim across the stream, which was about half a mile wide; the men were ferried over in the curious craft called "bull-boats." "They are of circular form," says Henry; "the timbers are only a few bent willows, about three inches in circumference, over which is stretched a raw buffalo hide with the hair inside, sewed fast to the gunnel; this is generally of willow, about two inches in diameter. I was surprised to see the great weight these tender vessels carried. We embarked baggage, saddles, etc., weighing at least two hundred pounds, with Mr. Chaboillez, myself, and our ferryman, who was a stout, lusty fellow, and our canoe or dish could have supported at least one hundred pounds more. In lieu of a paddle they use a pole about five feet long, split at one end, to admit a piece of board about two feet long and half a foot broad, which is lashed to the pole and forms a sort of cross; there is but one for each canoe. He who paddles makes directly for the opposite shore; every stroke he gives turns his dish almost entirely round; to recover his position and go on his intended route, he must give a stroke on the other hand, which brings him up again, and so on until he gets over, not without drifting down sometimes nearly a mile. Some, I observed, were more expert than others in managing their dishes, and did not

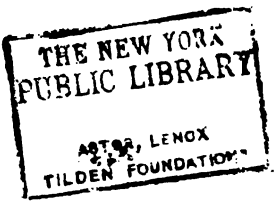
drift more than a quarter of a mile. As their vessels are very light, they take the precaution to carry them on their heads, or slung on their backs, to a considerable distance higher up the river than where they intend to land."

Henry says that from a distance the Mandan villages "appear like a cluster of mole-hills or muskrat cabins. The neatly circular huts are placed very irregularly; some so close to each other as scarcely to leave a foot-passage, others again at a distance of twenty to thirty feet apart. But about the center of each village is an open space of about four acres, around which the huts are regularly built at equal distances, fronting the open space."

Some of the huts were very large. Henry measured one of those in which he lodged and "found it ninety feet from the door to the opposite side. The whole space is first dug out about one and one-half feet below the surface of the earth. In the center is the square fireplace, about five feet on each side, dug out about two feet below the surface of the ground flat. The lower part of the hut is constructed by erecting strong posts about six feet out of the ground, at equal distances from each other, according to the proposed size of the hut, as they are not all of the same dimensions. Upon these are laid logs as large as the posts, reaching from post to post, to form the circle. On the outer side are placed [illegible] split wood seven feet long, in a slanting direction, one end resting on the ground, the other leaning against the cross-logs or beams. Upon these beams rest [illegible] thickness of a man's leg, and twelve to fifteen slanting enough to drain off the rain, and [illegible] to each other as to touch. The upper ends

From painting by George Catlin

Mandan Village on the Missouri River, 1832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are supported upon stout pieces of squared timber, which last are supported by four thick posts about five feet in circumference, fifteen feet out of the ground and fifteen feet asunder, forming a square. Over these squared timbers others of equal size are laid, crossing them at right angles, leaving an opening about four feet square. This serves for chimney and windows, as there are no other openings to admit light, and when it rains even this hole is covered over with a canoe. The whole roof is well thatched with the small willows in which the Missouri abounds, laid on to a thickness of six inches or more, fastened together in a very compact manner and well secured to the rafters. Over the whole is spread about one foot of earth, and around the wall, to the height of three or four feet, is commonly laid up earth to the thickness of three feet, for security in case of an attack and to keep out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, with a covered way or porch on the outside of the same height as the door, seven feet broad and ten in length. The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a frame and suspended by cords from one of the beams which form the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber."

One side of the huts was generally used as a stable for the horses, in order to keep these valuable animals from being stolen by lurking Assiniboines or other enemies. Only a railing separated the animals from the living quarters of the people themselves. The master sat upon a willow mat covered with a buffalo skin, and here he received his friends and smoked. A range of beds, one for each of his wives, extended to his left; then came beds for the young people. At the bottom of the hut, fronting the master's seat, stood his medicine stage.

Upon it usually lay a pair of bull's heads, which were esteemed a great Manitou and protection; there also were hung up the master's bows, shields, and other weapons, and whatever scalps he had taken. Near the stage stood the mortar and pestle for grinding corn. Fronting the porch was a stage for drying meat, corn, beans, and sliced squashes.

At this second village Henry witnessed the return of a hunting party of about a hundred warriors, each of which brought on his horse about half a buffalo. It was the custom of the Mandans usually to hunt in large parties, and they rarely used firearms for buffalo, bows and arrows being considered sufficiently effective. On the return of a hunting party, says Henry, "the horses are instantly unloaded and the meat is taken into the huts, where it is spread out upon the ground and exposed for some time before the master or mistress of the hut makes use of it. Soon afterward the women whose husbands or sons have not been hunting enter the huts of those who have secured meat; the mistress gives them a share, and they walk away with it. It often happens that so many of her acquaintances and friends thus drop in that not a mouthful remains for her own family. When this is the case, she in turn goes to the huts of friends who have been hunting, and comes away with a load. It is customary for them to go into as many huts as they think proper, and bring away more or less, according to the degree of intimacy that exists between the families, particularly among the women; for they are not without their little jealousies, domestic broils, and tales of scandal, like those of civilized nations. It is also customary for the old men and old women who have no sons nor any particular friends to assist them, on the first news of the

hunters' approach, to crawl a mile or more out of the villages and sit by the wayside, where almost every hunter in passing drops them a piece of meat. By these means every individual gets a share of what has been killed."

In their agriculture and in their use of houses the Mandans had made some progress along the road to civilization, yet they were still scarcely out of the savage stage. At times the men and women went about wearing little or no clothing, and Henry found them to be a very immoral people.

Henry and his party also visited the Gros Ventres (Big Bellies), a tribe whose way of living closely resembled that of the Mandans. The white men accompanied the Gros Ventres to make a treaty with the fierce Cheyennes, but the negotiations broke up in a great quarrel, and for a time a big battle appeared imminent. Henry gives an extended account of the painful ordeals to which the young men of these tribes submitted. "The greater part of the men," says he, "have lost a joint of several fingers, particularly of the left hand, and it is not uncommon to see only the two forefingers and thumbs entire. Amputation is performed for the loss of a near relation, and likewise during the days of penance, on which they display their fortitude and courage in the following manner: When a young man has attained the age of twenty years, he generally, in the depth of winter, performs his penance by setting out entirely naked and alone, with only two or three pairs of shoes, the iron barb of the arrow, and no means of making fire. In this condition he repairs to a certain high hill, a day's journey from the village. On this hill he must remain as many days as his strength will permit, during which time he

neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps, but passes the time in dancing, bawling, howling, and lamenting. Here also he amputates a finger with the iron barb brought for that purpose. Some have been known to be absent seven days in the severest weather. This may appear incredible, but I have it from several eye-witnesses of such pilgrimages, and do not doubt it. After several days—more or fewer—the penitent makes his appearance, coming at full speed, and as there is continually somebody upon the huts, information is instantly given of his return. He is met by a particular friend, who has kept account of the number of days he has been absent, and for every day has been prepared a bull's head, to which has been fastened one and one-half fathoms of cord. The other end of this is affixed to an incision in the penitent's back or shoulders, by pinching up a fold of skin and flesh, through which is thrust the barb of an arrow; as many days as he has been absent, so many must be the incisions, and the number of heads must also tally with them. He must then walk around the village, howling and bawling, with those bulls' heads trailing on the ground; in some places, where the ground is rough, the poor fellow must pull and tug hard to get through, as the horns continually catch in uneven spots, and often fall into some of the empty corn pits, where they would hold until the skin gave way or the cord broke, were they not attended to by some children, who make it their business to disengage the horns. So many days as he has been absent, so many times must he walk round the village, never ceasing to utter lamentations. Some have been known to fall senseless during this painful ordeal; but even they allow themselves only a few moments to recover, and proceed again. Having finished the necessary rounds, he is dis-

engaged from the bull's head by his friend, with a long harangue, applauding his courage and fortitude; he may then retire to his hut and take care of his wounds, as he is in a shocking condition. Some never recover, and others languish for months before they get well."

Lest the reader imagine that Henry overdraws this account, it should be said that there is ample evidence that it was the custom among some northwestern tribes for youths entering the estate of manhood to submit to even worse self-inflicted tortures than those just described.

On the return from the Missouri country Henry and his party endured many hardships. Some of their horses strayed away and were never found, but the party finally reached home in safety. To the last the pestiferous mosquitoes continued to trouble them, and near the end of the trip Henry was driven so nearly frantic by their persistent attacks that he whipped up his weary horse and rode the last few miles at a wild gallop.

Henry spent several years at posts up and down the Saskatchewan. There he became well acquainted with the Crees, Blackfeet, and other tribes.

"Their tents," says Henry, in describing the great tribe of Crees, "like those of all other tribes of the plains, are of dressed leather, erected with poles, generally seventeen in number, of which two are tied together about three feet from the top. These being erected and set apart at the base, the others are placed against them in a slanting position, meeting at the top, so that they all form nearly a circle, which is then covered with the leather. This consists of ten to fifteen dressed skins of the buffalo, moose, or red deer, well sewed together and nicely cut to fit the conical figure of the poles, with an opening above, to let out smoke and admit the light. From this opening

down to the door the two edges of the tent are brought close together and well secured with wooden pegs about six inches long, leaving for the door an oval aperture about two feet wide and three feet high, below which the edges are secured with similar pegs. This small entrance does well enough for the natives, who are brought up to it from infancy, but a European is puzzled to get through, as a piece of hide stretched upon a frame of the same shape as the door, but somewhat larger, hangs outside, and must be raised by hand to pass. These tents are spacious, measuring twenty feet in diameter. The fire is always made in the center, around which they generally place a range of stones to prevent the ashes from scattering and keep the fire compact. New tents are perfectly white; some of them are painted with red and black figures. These devices are generally derived from their dreams, being some sea-monster or other hideous animal, whose description has been handed down from their ancestors. A large camp of such tents, pitched regularly on a level plain, has a fine effect at a distance, especially when numerous bands of horses are seen feeding in all directions.

"The men in general tattoo their bodies and arms very much. The women confine their ornamentation to the chin, having three perpendicular lines from the middle of the chin to the lip, and one or more running on each side, nearly parallel with the corner of the mouth. Their dress consists of leather; that of the men is a pair of leggings, reaching up to the hip, and fastened to the breech-clout girth. The clout itself is generally a few inches of woolen stuff; but, when this cannot be procured, they use a piece of dressed leather about nine inches broad and four feet long, whose ends are drawn through the girth

and hang down before and behind about a foot. They are not so particular and decent in this part of their dress as the Saulteurs. The shirt is of soft dressed leather, either cabbrie [antelope] or young red deer [elk], close about the neck and hanging to the middle of the thigh; the sleeves are of the same, loose and open under the arms to the elbows, but thence to the wrists sewed tight. The cap is commonly a piece of leather, or skin with the hair on, shaped to fit the head, and tied under the chin; the top is usually decorated with feathers or other ornament. Shoes are made of buffalo hide dressed in the hair, and mittens of the same. Over the whole a buffalo robe is thrown, which serves as covering day and night. Such is their common dress; but on particular occasions they appear to greater advantage, having their cap, shirt, leggings, and shoes perfectly clean and white, trimmed with porcupine-quills and other ingenious work of their women, who are supposed to be the most skilful hands in the country at decorations of this kind. Their dress consists of the same materials as the men's. Their leggings do not reach above the knee, and are gathered below that joint; their shoes always lack decoration. The shift or body-garment reaches down to the calf, where it is generally fringed and trimmed with quill-work; the upper part is fastened over the shoulders by strips of leather; a flap or cape hangs down about a foot before and behind, and is ornamented with quill-work and fringe. This covering is quite loose, but tied around the waist with a belt of stiff parchment, fastened on the side, where also some ornaments are suspended. The sleeves are detached from the body-garment; from the wrist to the elbow they are sewed, but thence to the shoulder they are open underneath and drawn up to the neck, where they are fastened

across the breast and back. Their ornaments are two or three coils of brass wire twisted around the rim of each ear, in which incisions are made for the purpose; blue beads, brass rings, quill-work, and fringe occasionally answer. Vermilion is much used by the women to paint the face. Their hair is generally parted on the crown, and fastened behind each ear in large knots, from which are suspended bunches of blue beads, or other ingenious work of their own. The men adjust their hair in various forms; some have it parted on top and tied in a tail on each side, while others make one long queue which hangs down behind, and around which is twisted a strip of otter skin or dressed buffalo entrails. This tail is frequently increased in thickness and length by adding false hair, but others allow it to flow loose naturally. Combs are seldom used by the men, and they never smear the hair with grease, but red earth is sometimes put upon it. White earth daubed over the hair generally denotes mourning. The young men sometimes have a bunch of hair on the crown, about the size of a small teacup, and nearly in the shape of that vessel upside down, to which they fasten various ornaments of feathers, quill-work, ermine tails, etc. Red and white earth and charcoal are much used in their toilets; with the former they usually daub their robes and other garments, some red and others white. The women comb their hair and use grease on it."

At these Plains posts the traders were greatly troubled by Indian horse thieves. Henry's pages are full of references to losses of this sort. In the autumn of 1809 when Henry was stationed at Fort Vermilion, the white men had the good fortune to capture a Cree who attempted to make off with some of their horses. The man was a notorious thief and murderer, and the traders re-

From a photograph by Horetzky

Dog trains in the foothills of the Rockies

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solved to make an example of him. A sort of trial was held, and the Indian was found guilty. In the morning of the next day he was led down to the river bank below the Hudson's Bay house and was shot down by a firing squad of fifteen men.

For some years Henry shifted up and down the Saskatchewan from one post to another, trading with the Crees, Bloods, Blackfeet, Sarcees, Slaves, Assiniboines, Piegans, and other tribes. He had many dangerous experiences, and tells many tales of these and of the brutal conflicts between the Indians themselves. It was to the interest of the traders to keep the tribes at peace with one another, but often they found the task beyond their power.

For a time he was stationed at Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan in the foothills of the mountains. He gives very full details of the natives and natural wonders of the place, and describes vast beds of coal which he saw in the river banks. It is only now that we are beginning to realize that in this region there exists one of the greatest coal deposits in the world.

In the late winter of 1811 he made a hard trip with snowshoes and sleds through Howse Pass over the great divide to the head of a stream flowing into the Columbia. He was not, however, the first man to do this, as we shall see a little later. On this trip he saw and obtained specimens of the famous bighorn sheep. He also saw bands of the little known white goats, but they were upon such inaccessible cliffs and peaks that neither he nor any of his hunters were able to kill one.

The Indians west of the mountains made an excellent kind of bow out of slips of the horns of the sheep. The outside of the horn was left undressed but was overlaid

with several layers of sinew glued to the thickness of a third of an inch and then covered with rattlesnake skin. The inside of the bow was smoothly polished and displayed several ridges of the horn. The bows were three feet long and would throw an arrow an amazing distance. The arrows were longer than those used by the plains Indians, were well feathered, and in the past had been tipped with flint but in more recent years with iron. These bows were held in such esteem that a plains Indian would sometimes trade a gun or a horse for one of them.

While stationed at the Rocky Mountain House Henry bought of an Indian a large black dog, "of a breed between a hound and a Newfoundland," which had been captured by a raiding party that had plundered and murdered some American traders in the Missouri country. The dog would not permit the Indians to hitch him to a sled, and he, therefore, came to the post perfectly light and free. "He entered my house," says Henry, "without any ceremony, looked about, jumped and fawned upon us, and would not return to the Indian tents. His master had to take him away with a line, and keep him tied to a tentpole, where a wolfskin was spread for him to lie upon. On their going away I purchased him for a fathom of tobacco and a scalper, and the poor beast was rejoiced to remain with us."

In 1813 Henry crossed the continent and established himself near the mouth of the Columbia at Astoria, the post founded a few years before by the celebrated John Jacob Astor. Here, as agent of the Northwest Company, he dealt with the Chinook tribes, and was associated with many of the characters made familiar by Washington Irving's *Astoria*. He has much to say of salmon, sea

lions, commass, and other products of the region. He was present when the British man-of-war *Raccoon* seized the post and substituted the Union Jack for the Stars and Stripes—temporarily, it proved. Here Henry ended his adventurous career, for on May 22, 1814, a sailboat in which he and half a dozen others were going from the post to a ship called the *Isaac Todd* was upset and Henry and all the others except one man perished.

CHAPTER IX

METHODS OF TRAVEL IN THE FUR LAND

OURS is an age of rapid transit. The Atlantic has been crossed by steamer in less than five days and by airplane in sixteen hours and twelve minutes. Express trains whisk a traveler from New York to Chicago, and the trip across the continent can be made in less than a week. Men think nothing of motoring forty, fifty, or even a hundred miles to fill a dinner engagement.

So accustomed have we become to the virtual annihilation of space that it is difficult for us to understand and appreciate the tremendous difficulties which the early explorers of America faced. In reading about their trials we must recall that there were then no steam engines or electric motors, no telegraphs or telephones, that travel on water must be performed by wind power or hand power, that travel on land must be on foot or at best on the backs of horses, that there were no roads or even trails, that the supply of food was always precarious, and that in the wilderness lurked savage beasts and even more savage and dangerous men. A journey across the Atlantic was then an affair of months not days, while that across the continent required years and was not performed until three hundred years after Columbus found the New World.

Take, for example, the matter of food. The amount that can be carried in a canoe or on pack-horses is limited to a few months' supply at most. If the traveler starts

out on foot with a pack-sack, he can take with him, in addition to his gun, blanket, and other necessary articles, a supply for only a week or two; and if he is penetrating into the wilderness there are no stores at which he can buy more. Of course, in a new country fish can sometimes be caught or game killed, but it is dangerous to depend upon doing either. I recall that once in the mountains of northern British Columbia my French Canadian helper and I were seven days from our canoe and cache; we had hunted along the way and had seen some mountain goats but had killed nothing except a Franklin's grouse; and the food in our pack-sacks was down to two or three cups of flour and corn meal, a bit of bacon the size of one's hand, and a little tea and salt. In this case all turned out happily, for the next day I killed a bear and the next day two mountain sheep, so that we had an abundance of meat; but, had we not found game, we would have been forced to starve for several days on our way back to the canoe and cache.

The slow rate of travel in pioneer days is another matter that can scarcely be understood by those who are accustomed only to motor cars and express trains and who have never journeyed under primitive conditions. To-day one can be whisked by train from Montreal to the northwestern shore of Lake Superior in thirty-six hours; La Vérendrye and his party were seventy-two days making the same journey in their birch canoes. The trip from the Canadian plains across the mountains to the Pacific can be made by the Canadian Pacific or the Grand Trunk Pacific in twenty-seven hours; it was an affair of months of toilsome and dangerous effort in Mackenzie's time.

Again a personal experience may be helpful. One

September morning ten years ago our pack-train, which had just left Edson, then track's end on the new Grand Trunk Pacific, came out upon a bluff overlooking the McLeod River in western Alberta and we beheld before us the white-toothed summits of the Rockies towering high beyond the green sea of spruce-covered foothills. Off to the southwest stood one whose summit resembled the roof of a great house.

"De sheep lick is dere," said Jimmy Paul, our Cree guide; "maybe you get some bighorns dere."

The mountain did not seem so very far away, but it took us nine weary days to reach it. And I might add that when we got back to Edson on the return, it took me only *five* days to make the trip by train back to my home in Indiana.

In the Fur Land long trips in summer were generally made by boat or canoe and in winter by dog sledge. In the Plains region at all seasons of the year much use was also made of horses.

Supplies and trading goods were brought in during the summer either by way of the Great Lakes or Hudson Bay. In either case long river journeys were required to bring them to the region of Lake Winnipeg, and those destined for posts farther west were then taken up the Saskatchewan and thence scattered by other streams to posts on the Mackenzie, Peace, and elsewhere.

It was a slow trade, and those who engaged in it had to wait a long time for their profits. Alexander Mackenzie tells us that in his day the Canadian agents of his Company were obliged to order their goods from England in October, eighteen months before they could leave Montreal. The goods would arrive in Canada the following summer, and during the next winter they would be

made up into such articles as the Indians desired and would be packed into parcels of about ninety pounds each. In the following May the bundles would be started in birch canoes for the Northwest by way of the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, Lake Nipissing, French River, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, Rainy Lake, Lake Winnipeg, and the Saskatchewan River. Many portages had to be made along the way, and months elapsed before the goods reached their destination. They were then exchanged for furs, which, in the words of Mackenzie, "come to Montreal the next fall, and from thence are shipped, chiefly to London, where they are not sold or paid for before the succeeding spring, or even as late as June; which is forty-two months after the goods were ordered in Canada; thirty-six after they were shipped from England, and twenty-four after they had been forwarded from Montreal." Indeed in the case of a few of the most remote fur posts twelve months longer were required, which meant a period of almost five years between the time the goods were ordered and when the furs were finally sold. Such trade called for large capital, and the interest charge was, of course, very heavy.

The articles most in demand for the Indian trade consisted chiefly of coarse woolen cloths, blankets, arms, ammunition, tobacco, linens, coarse sheetings, thread, lines, twine, knives, axes, brass and copper kettles, handkerchiefs, and spirituous liquors.

In Mackenzie's time a typical year's trade in furs by way of Canada included 106,000 beaver skins, 2,100 bear skins, 41,500 fox skins, 4,600 otter skins, 17,000 musquash skins, 32,000 marten skins, 500 buffalo robes, 6,000 lynx skins, 600 wolverine skins, 1,650 fisher skins, 3,800 wolf skins, 750 elk skins, and 1,950 deer skins. In

addition, the Hudson's Bay Company took out many more by way of Hudson Bay.

At the time the Hudson's Bay Company was competing with the Northwest Company it made use in large measure of heavy wooden boats to transport its goods to and from the interior. These craft had the advantage of great strength, and they could endure many hard knocks, but it was hard work to move them upstream or across portages.

The Northwest Company generally used birchbark canoes, and after the consolidation of the two companies in 1821 this craft became popular with all the traders. Some of these canoes were as much as ninety feet long, though thirty-six feet was a more common length. All were capable of carrying a very heavy load. At the same time they were comparatively light, were easily tracked or poled upstream, and, compared with the wooden boats, it was child's play to carry them over a portage. Their great weakness was that they were very easily injured. If one so much as touched a rock or snag, a leak was almost inevitable. Every canoe carried a supply of birchbark, gum, and fibrous roots of spruce or cedar called "watape," for putting on patches, and hardly a day would pass that they must not be used. The journals of the explorers and early fur traders are full of accounts of "breaking" canoes and of delays spent in repairing them. Many of the canoes were fancifully painted on bow and stern with mystical figures that were supposed to increase the speed of the craft.

Some of the canoe-men were Scotchmen or Orkneymen, but during most of the nineteenth century by far the greater number were French Canadians and half-breeds. The French Canadian and half-breed voyageurs were a

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Reproduced by courtesy the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway

Scow running the Grand Canyon of the Fraser River

happy-go-lucky set, content with the world if their stomachs were full of grub and their pipes full of tobacco. Although most of them were usually deeply in debt to the Company, they would paddle gaily over lakes and down rivers singing boat-songs, some of them brought over from France generations before. They were very fond of bright-colored clothing, and their appearance was most picturesque. Such a man would paddle all day and dance all night and was ready, whenever opportunity offered, to drink strong waters as long as the supply lasted.

Let us follow for a little while a brigade of such canoes as it leaves a Hudson's Bay fort on the border in the year 1830 for a post farther west. The fort itself is surrounded by a palisade of logs set on end in the ground and about twelve feet high, the stockade being flanked at each corner with a two-story bastion, also of logs, from loopholes in the walls of which a flanking fire can be delivered against any assailants. Within the stockade stand the log storehouses and living quarters, and over all towers a flagstaff from which floats the Company's flag, bearing the motto "*Pro pelle cutem*," which means, "Skin for skin."

At the edge of the river threescore men have launched a dozen birchbark canoes and are loading into them freight packages, blankets, guns, kettles, and other paraphernalia. During this process great care is taken to prevent the canoes from touching anything except the water, for a scrape even against the gravel of the bottom may start a leak. The swarthy voyageurs, resplendent in scarlet sashes, beaded moose-hide moccasins, and colored kerchiefs tied turban-fashion round their heads, step lightly into the canoes, the bowman being the last to enter. The canoes are then shoved out into the current

and fall into irregular line, one behind the other. Pipes are lighted, the paddles dip in rhythm, there are parting shouts and salutes to those left behind, and the flotilla swings round a bend on its long westward journey.

The tall trees on shore seem marching past in stately procession, while ahead flocks of ducks reluctantly take wing and fly downstream, to repeat the process again and again every mile or so. Presently some one starts up a lively *chanson à l'aviron* known as *The White Rose,* and the chorus echoes from bank to bank of the silent river and up through the spruce-covered hills:

"Je n'ai pas trouvé personne
Que le rossignol chantant la belle rose,
La belle rose du rosier blanc!
Qui me dit dans son langage
Marie-toi, car il est temps, à la belle rose,
A la belle rose du rosier blanc!
Comment veux-tu que je me marie avec la belle rose,
La belle rose du rosier blanc?
Mon père n'est pas content de la belle rose,
De la belle rose du rosier blanc!
Ni mon père, ni mon mère,
Ni aucun de mes parents,
La belle rose du rosier blanc!"

For miles all is easy going, then a roar is heard ahead which gradually grows louder and louder. The current quickens, and across the stream from shore to shore stretches a long reach of turbulent white water. The bowman in the foremost canoe stands up and takes a careful survey of the rapid. It is full of jagged rocks and to the uninitiated eye there seems no possible pas-

From a photograph by F. C. Swannell

Portaging a dugout canoe on the Upper Finlay River

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sage, but the experienced eye of the bowman quickly picks out a practicable route, and he indicates it to the steersman, who, as the craft draws nearer, also stands up and studies the situation. Now they are in white water, and the canoe goes glancing downward almost with the speed of an arrow. Destruction seems imminent more than once, but the crew are fully masters of the situation, and deft paddling at the proper time enables them to avoid all obstacles. Soon they are riding safely in the eddy at the foot of the rapids and are commenting critically upon the expertness of the crews behind them.

To run rapids that may to a green hand look extremely dangerous is to experienced canoe-men mere child's play. More dangerous rapids call for close attention, and the right thing must be done at exactly the right moment. Occasionally rapids are met that only the boldest and most expert will attempt, and even they occasionally come to grief.

Towards noon the flotilla comes to a spot where the river narrows and swings between high rocky banks and then goes plunging over a ledge twenty feet in height. A portage must be made. While most of the men are carrying the goods and canoes along a well-worn track two hundred yards in length, the cooks build fires and cook the midday meal. This eaten, the flotilla is off again, to camp that evening in some favorable spot. So goes the journey, day after day, down the river and through great lakes until at last the mouth of the great Saskatchewan is reached.

Then the real journey begins. Only in comparatively still water is it possible to advance upstream by paddling. Poles shod with iron are brought into use, and in the really swift stretches men walk ahead on shore tracking

the canoes, that is, pulling them along with ropes. This poling and tracking work is terribly exhausting, and when camp is made at night there is much less merriment and hilarity than was the case on the downstream journey.

As winter draws on there is a period when travel by any method is difficult and disagreeable. There is enough ice running in the rivers to prohibit navigation by boats or canoes, while the snow on land is not yet deep enough for sledging. But presently winter closes down in earnest; deep snows cover the ground; the rivers and lakes freeze so solid that it is safe to travel on them. Meanwhile old snowshoes have been restrung with *babiche,* as the strings of caribou or moose hide are called, or new ones are made altogether; sledges and dog harness are put in order. Then it is that the dogs which have spent the summer prowling about the cabins of the half-breeds, snatching up everything eatable that comes in their way, fighting each other, and usually half-starving in preparation for the hard work ahead, come in demand.

These dogs are of almost every breed or a mixture of almost every breed. In the far north one sees occasionally the pure husky of the Eskimos, with bushy tails, long hair, fox-shaped heads, and sharp-pointed ears. But most sledge dogs are mere curs, without any pride of ancestry. They are " large, long-legged, and wolfish, with sharp muzzles, pricked ears, and thick, straight, wiry hair. White is one of the most usual colors, but brown, blue-gray, red, yellow, and white marked with spots of black, or of the other various hues, are also common. Some of them are black with white paws, others are covered with long rough hair, like Russian setters. There are others of a light bluish-gray, with dark, almost black

spots spread over the whole body. Almost all of them have black noses, but with some of the lighter-colored ones this part is red, brown, or pink, which has a very ugly effect. Most of them are very wolfish in appearance, many being half or partly, or all but entirely, wolves in blood. One frequently sees dark-gray dogs which are said to be almost pure wolves. Seen upon the prairie, it is almost impossible to distinguish them from the ordinary wolf of the middle-sized variety; and their tempers are spoken of as a match for their looks."

In summer the dogs are generally left to shift for themselves and, as has already been said, lead a miserable, half-starved existence. But by experience their masters have learned that dogs cannot work without eating, and in winter more attention is paid to providing them with food. Meat of any kind, pemmican, or whatever offers, is given them; one of the commonest kinds of dog food is dried whitefish. The food is doled out to the dogs every evening, hardly ever enough to satisfy their wolfish appetites; it is only when moose, caribou, or other big game is killed that the poor beasts are likely to have a real "feed." When their rations are tossed to them, they bolt the food as fast as they can swallow it, partly in the hope that they may be able to steal something from slower comrades; at feeding time, therefore, it is necessary for the drivers to stand ready with whips and clubs to see that each dog has his share. When really hungry, some dogs will eat their harness or even gnaw holes in the lodges.

Food for the dogs forms one of the grave problems on long trips through unsettled country. A dog will eat in about two weeks all that he can pull; hence that length of time forms about the limit to a dog-sledge journey

unless food can be bought along the way or fish caught or game killed. Some Arctic explorers, Peary for example, use the plan of killing the weaker dogs and feeding them to their comrades, when the supply of dog food becomes low. Sometimes it has happened that at the end of a long journey the dogs will have eaten not only all the food but also most of their fellows.

The sledges used are of various kinds. Some have runners, but those in use in the Northwest are generally of the toboggan kind. A common way to make a sledge of the last sort is to take a board of hard-wood about half an inch thick, fifteen or twenty inches wide, and eight or ten feet long, steam and bend one end up in the form of a half circle. Sometimes two narrower boards are used instead of one. To this board a light boxlike frame is lashed with rawhide, if the sled is intended to carry a passenger, and this box is lined with furs or blankets to keep the occupant warm. If designed primarily for freight purposes, however, a wrapper of moose or caribou hide may be lashed to the board, the load is stowed inside this, and then the wrapper is laced on top, so that, in case of a capsize, nothing can fall out and all that is necessary is for the driver to right the sledge.

The dog harness varies greatly from rude thongs of rawhide to gaily ornamented outfits of leather, with buckles and other supposed improvements. For traveling on ice the dogs may be hitched abreast, but in the woods or all broken country they must be placed in tandem fashion. Naturally the position of leading dog is most important, and this place is assigned to the best-trained animal in the team. When the snow is deep, one man goes ahead on snowshoes and breaks trail. This is laborious work, and turns are taken at it.

Photograph by Ivor Guest

Free trader bringing in fur in midwinter

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Driving a dog team is an art in itself. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the attempts of a tenderfoot to drive a sledge. The dogs are naturally perverse, even under expert management, and when they realize that the driver does not understand his task, they will fight, get tangled up in the traces, and do any number of other provoking things, usually ending up by overturning the sledge. The following passage, from Robinson's *The Great Fur Land*, pictures some of the trials which the traveler by dog-sledge must expect to experience:

"To assist his own locomotion, the traveler ties on his largest pair of snowshoes, say five feet long and fifteen inches wide. A man can walk much faster on snowshoes, with a fair track, than on the best road without them; but when the trail is frozen perfectly hard, the traveler casts them off, and runs behind the dogs, who are able to gallop at great speed along the slippery path; and in this manner the most extraordinary journeys have been made. With a crack of the whip, and a harsh command to the dogs, the train moves off. After that, a perpetual shouting and cursing, cracking of whips and howling of dogs, seem necessary to keep the cavalcade in motion. And it is scarcely to be wondered at when one comes to consider the conduct of the dogs at the very beginning of the journey.

"The start is generally made at a very early hour in the morning; for the traveler invariably accomplishes a good portion of his day's tramp before breakfast. It is, say, two long hours before daybreak when the dogs are put in harness. It is a morning of bitter cold; a faint old moon hangs low down in the east; over the dreary stretch of snow-covered plain a shadowy Aurora flickers across the stars; it is all as wild and cheerless a spectacle as

the eye can look upon; and the work of getting the unwilling dogs in their harness is done by the half-breeds in no very amiable mood. In the haste and darkness of the time but scant attention is given to getting the cowering brutes into their proper places in the traces. In consequence, when the traveler assumes charge of his sledge, an ominous tendency to growl and fight tells him that something is wrong in his train. It is too dark to see plainly, but a touch of the cold nose of the leader informs him that the right dog is in the wrong place. It is too late, however, to rectify the mistake; the half-breeds are already off, and the sound of their dire anathemas grows fainter and fainter upon the ear. So the whip is mercilessly applied, and, amid the yells of the unhappy brutes, the sledge grinds slowly off through the frozen snow.

" But the memory of that mistake rankles in the breast of the foregoer; and just when a steady pace is attained, and peace seems to have returned to the train, he suddenly countermarches in the harness, and prostrates the unoffending steerdog at his post. The attack, too, is made with so much suddenness and vigor that the wondering victim—who is perfectly contented with the change, having thereby won the easiest place in the train —instantly capitulates, and ' turns a turtle ' in his traces. The trouble might end here but for the fact that the unlooked-for assault is generally accompanied by a flank movement on the part of the two middle dogs, who, when there is any fighting lying around, are pretty sure to have a tooth in on their own account. And having no particular grudge to take out, but only mad on general principles, they are equally indifferent in attacking the head of the rear dog or the tail of the one in front. This

condition of things naturally leads to fearful confusion in the train; they jump on one another; they tangle their traces, and back-bands, and collar-straps, into inextricable knots and interlacings, which baffle the stiffened fingers of the angry traveler to unravel. Frequently they roll themselves into one huge ball, presenting the appearance of a hydra-headed dog, with multitudinous legs and innumerable tails. The rapid application of the whip only seems to make matters worse—conveying the idea to each infuriated dog that he is being badly bitten by an unknown antagonist. The traveler, having tried everything else, and with patience entirely gone, at last in sheer despair, but unwittingly, follows the example of the poet of Perth, who 'stoode in ta middle of ta roade and swoore at lairge'; having a faint idea, nevertheless, that he is in no way capable of doing justice to the subject. The effect, however, is magical; the confused train straightens out under illimitable imprecation, with a celerity clearly illustrating the manner of its early training. As for the bewildered traveler, he has unwittingly discovered the true secret of dog-driving."

When curses did not suffice, blows were used, and there was no limit to the cruelty to which many Indians and half-breeds and even some white men would go when enraged at their dogs. The pages of books written by travelers in the Northwest are filled with passages describing scenes of this kind. Witness the following passages from Colonel Butler's *The Great Lone Land:*

"Coffee, Tête Noir, Michinass, and another whose name I forget, underwent repeated whalings at the hands of my driver, a half-breed from Edmonton named Frazer. Early in the afternoon the head of Tête Noir was reduced to shapeless pulp from tremendous thrashings. Michinass,

or the 'Spotted One,' had one eye wherewith to watch the dreaded driver, and Coffee had devoted so much strength to wild lurches and sudden springs in order to dodge the descending whip, that he had none whatever to bestow upon his legitimate toil of hauling me. At length, so useless did he become, that he had to be taken out altogether from the harness and left to his fate on the river. 'And this,' I said to myself, 'is dog-driving; this inhuman thrashing and varied cursing, this frantic howling of dogs, this bitter, terrible cold is the long-talked-of mode of winter travel!'"

A day or two later Colonel Butler "witnessed the first example of a very common occurrence in dog-driving—I beheld the operation known as 'sending a dog to Rome.' This consists simply of striking him over the head with a large stick until he falls perfectly senseless to the ground; after a little he revives, and, with memory of the awful blows that took his consciousness away full upon him, he pulls frantically at his load. Oftentimes a dog is 'sent to Rome' because he will not allow the driver to arrange some hitch in the harness; then, while he is insensible, the necessary alteration is carried out, and when the dog recovers he receives a terrible lash of the whip to set him going again. The half-breeds are a race easily offended, prone to sulk if reproved; but at the risk of causing delay and inconvenience I had to interfere with a peremptory order that 'sending to Rome' should be at once discontinued in my trains. The wretched 'Whiskey,' after his voyage to the Eternal City, appeared quite overcome with what he had there seen, and continued to stagger along the trail, making feeble efforts to keep straight. This tendency to wobble caused the half-breeds to indulge in *funny* remarks, one of them calling the

track a 'drunken trail.' Finally, 'Whiskey' was abandoned to his fate"; that is, he was left to die of starvation and cold on the blizzard-swept plains. However, the next night the poor dog managed to stagger into camp, "for, after all, there was one fate worse than being 'sent to Rome,' and that was being left to starve."

It is true that many of the sledge dogs were wild and wolfish, yet there were few that would not respond to kind treatment. Colonel Butler himself made the experiment. "From the camp of Chicag," says he, "I had driven my own train of dogs, with Bear the sole companion of the journey. Nor were these days on the great lakes [Winnipegoosis, Winnipeg, and Manitoba] by any means the dullest of the journey, Cerf Volant, Tigre, Cariboo, and Muskeymote gave ample occupation to their driver. Long before Manitoba was reached they had learned a new lesson—that men were not all cruel in camp or on the road. It is true that in the learning of that lesson some little difficulty was occasioned by the sudden loosening and disruption of ideas implanted by generations of cruelty in the dog-mind of my train. It is true that Muskeymote, in particular, long held aloof from offers of friendship, and then suddenly passed from the excess of caution to the extreme of imprudence, imagining, doubtless, that the millennium had at length arrived, and that dogs were henceforth no more to haul. But Muskeymote was soon set right upon that point, and showed no inclination to repeat his mistake. Then there was Cerf Volant, that most perfect Esquimaux. Cerf Volant entered readily into friendship, upon an understanding of an additional half-fish at supper every evening. No alderman ever loved his turtle better than did Cerf Volant love his whitefish; but I rather think that

the whitefish was better earned than the turtle—however, we will let that be a matter of opinion. Having satisfied his hunger, which, by-the-way, is a luxury only allowed the hauling-dog once a day, Cerf Volant would generally establish himself in close proximity to my feet, frequently on the top of the bag, from which coign of vantage he would exchange fierce growls with any dog who had the temerity to approach us."

Cerf Volant was, in fact, a most unusual dog. He was so big and strong that he won from his admiring master the epithet of "The Untiring." He not only served Butler on a long sledge trip in the Great Lone Land in the winter of 1870-71, but the next year he accompanied him on an exhausting journey from Red River to the Pacific. After helping for thousands of miles to pull his master's sleigh, he reached civilization at last and made the yet longer journey to California and thence across the Continent to Boston.

"The Untiring took readily to civilization; he looked at Shasta, he sailed on the Columbia River, he climbed the dizzy ledges of the Yosemite, he gazed at the Golden Gate and saw the sun sink beyond the blue waves of the great Salt Lake, but none of these scenes seemed to effect him in the slightest degree. He journeyed in the boot or on the roof of a stage-coach for more than eight hundred miles; he was weighed once as extra baggage, and classified and charged as such; he conducted himself with all possible decorum in the rooms and corridors of the grand hotel at San Francisco; he crossed the continent in a railway carriage to Montreal and Boston, as though he had been a first-class passenger since childhood; he thought no more of the reception-room of Brigham Young in Utah, than had he been standing on a snow-

From a photograph by Horetzky

Jasper House, a fur post on the headwaters of the Athabasca River

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drift in Athabasca Lake; he was duly photographed and petted and pampered, but he took it all as a matter of course. There were, however, two facts in civilization which caused him unutterable astonishment—a brass band and a butcher's stall. He fled from the one; he howled with delight before the other."

Four miles an hour is about the usual pace of dogs dragging a well-loaded sledge over ordinary snow, and forty miles is not unusual in a day of ten hours. Sixty to eighty miles with a light sledge upon a smooth snow-crust or a well-beaten track have often been made. One hears in the North of even more extraordinary journeys. For example, a young Scotch half-breed at Fort Garry, now Winnipeg, was desirous of attending the wedding of his sister at that place, and made the round trip from Fort Garry to Pembina, one hundred and thirty miles, with the mail sledge, drawn by a single team of dogs, in fourteen hours.

When parties of white men traveled for long distances on horseback, the baggage was carried on the backs of horses taken along for that purpose. Much skill was required in tying the baggage on the pack-saddles, and various styles of loops and knots were evolved, such as the "squaw hitch," the "diamond hitch," etc. Travel with a pack-train is always slow, but if time is no object, long distances can be covered in this way, for the horses can pick up their own feed at the camping places, and the amount of supplies that can be carried is limited only by the number of beasts of burden taken. Furthermore, a pack-train can penetrate into rough country where it would be impossible to take a wagon.

In the Red River region the half-breeds made large use of a two-wheeled cart that was drawn by a horse or ox.

Henry, in his Journal, describes the making of one of these, perhaps the first ever built. Ordinarily no iron whatever was used in their manufacture. They consisted of a sort of box mounted on two immense, wooden wheels, and had rough shafts in front. As the axles were rarely or never greased, the protesting shrieks of the carts could be heard on still days for miles. The half-breeds explained their not using grease by saying they did not wish to steal up silently upon anybody.

The Plains Indians did much of their traveling with horses. They, too, evolved a rude sort of conveyance known by the French as a *travois,* but variously called *travail, travaille, traverse,* and *travee.* This consisted of two poles, one end of each of which was lashed to the sides of a horse, while the opposite ends dragged on the ground. Cross-pieces were lashed between the poles, and hides were stretched over these cross-pieces and between the poles in such a way as to form a sort of litter in which persons could ride or goods be placed. At the rear of any band of Indians on the march there was likely to be a number of these *travailles,* drawn usually by old, broken-down ponies. In the same *travois* the spectator might see an aged squaw, two or three beady-eyed children not yet old enough to bestride a pony, and perhaps a bag of pemmican.

CHAPTER X

HOW THE RED RIVER HALF-BREEDS HUNTED THE BUFFALOES

THE traders and settlers in the region of the Red River of the North early discovered, as we have seen in our account of Alexander Henry, that potatoes and other agricultural products could be grown in great profusion. Selkirk's Scotch colonists, of whom more will be said hereafter, and to a much smaller extent the French Canadian settlers also cultivated the soil. But farming is a prosaic occupation; even the raising of cattle seems somewhat dull when on the wide plains not far away roam tens of thousands of animals of the bovine tribe that may be had for the killing. It was only human nature, therefore, that the European settlers and still more their half-breed descendants should revert in large measure to primitive methods of obtaining a livelihood. Out of this situation there developed what H. M. Robinson in his fascinating book, *The Great Fur Land*, calls "the most perfectly-organized, effective, and picturesque periodically-recurring hunting-excursions known to any nomadic peoples." From his graphic pages the material for this chapter is largely taken.

Two hunts were made a year, one beginning about the first of June, the second about the end of August. The latter, the great fall hunt, is the one we shall describe.

Some days before the appointed time the hunters and their families began to gather at the rendezvous, which

had previously been selected. A favorite gathering place was Pembina Mountain, which stands in the northeast corner of what is now North Dako'a. Thither streamed along well-known trails long trains of creaking Red River carts, drawn by horses or oxen; the men, for the most part rode on horseback, while the carts were filled with women and black-eyed children; and many unsaddled horses, some of them well-trained buffalo runners, were led behind the carts or were driven along the trail. Some days before the appointed time the plain on the banks of the stream that runs by Pembina Mountain would be " covered with a motley grouping of carts, canvas tents, smoke-brown leather tepees, and, in lieu of other shelter, small squares of cotton or raw-hide stretched from cart to cart, or over a rough framework of poles. For miles around the prairie is alive with ponies, hoppled, tied to lariat pins, or dragging about poles as a preventive against straying. Mingled with this kicking, neighing herd wander hundreds of oxen—patient, lowing kine, the youthful vivacity of which has given place to middle-aged steadiness. Through this compact mass of animal life gallop with a wild scurry, from time to time, half-nude boys, breaking a narrow pathway in search of some needed ox or pony, or hurrying the whole struggling mass riverward.

" In the camp the sole occupation of the day is the pursuit of pleasure. From every tent and shelter comes the sound of laughter; every camp-fire furnishes its quota of jest and song. Here a small but excited circle, gathered under the shade of a cart, are deeply engaged in gambling by what is known as the ' moccasin game.' In an empty moccasin are placed sundry buttons and bullets, which, being shaken up, involve the guessing of the

number in the shoe. The ground is covered with guns, capotes, and shirts, the volatile half-breed often stripping the clothing from his back to satisfy his passion for play, or staking his last horse and cart. There another like-minded party are gambling with cards, the stakes being a medley of everything portable owned by the players. In many tents rum is holding orgy, and the clinking of cups, boisterous laughter and song, tell of the direst enemy of the hunter. In another quarter feasting is the order of the day, and the small stock of provisions, designed to supply the family until the buffalo were reached, is being devoured at a sitting. The host knows this; but, then, he selects a feast and its consequent famine. Yonder tawny Pyramus is making love to dusky Thisbe after the most approved fashion. They seem indifferent to the exposure of the camp, and conduct their wooing as if no curious eyes were upon them. About the many camp-fires stand, or crouch, the wives of the hunters, busily engaged in culinary operations, or gossiping with neighbors, while their numerous scantily-attired offspring play about in the dust and dirt with wolfish-looking dogs. The baby of the family, fastened to a board, leans against a cart-wheel, doubtless revolving in its infantile mind those subtile questions pertinent to babyhood."

Elsewhere the aged leaders of the hunt might be seen congregated. Perched on the wheel of a cart farther on some "long-haired Paganini" would be "drawing rude melodies from a fractured violin," while about would be congregated a crowd of hearers, applauding each performance or suggesting some favorite tune, and now and then engaging in "an improvised break-down, or executing a *pas seul* the very embodiment of caricature." "Above all

rises the clamor of many tongues, speaking many languages, the neighing of horses, the lowing of kine, the barking of hundreds of dogs, and the shouts and yells of fresh arrivals, as they pour hourly in to swell the numbers of the already vast encampment."

In the afternoon, if the weather was favorable, most of the people in the camp would gather on some level stretch of prairie outside, where a straightaway race course had been laid off. Well-known leaders of the hunt would be stationed at either end, and the racing would begin. "Betting runs high, the wagers of the principals being generally horse against horse, those of outsiders ranging from valuable horses down through carts and oxen to the clothing worn at the moment. All is excitement, and as the contestants dash forward, with that peculiar plunging of the heels into the flanks of the horses at every jump, affected by the plains-hunter, it breaks forth in cheers and gesticulations of encouragement to the favorite. All points of disagreement are quickly settled by the dictum of the umpires, and the loser quietly strips saddle and bridle from his much-prized animal, and consoles himself for the loss in copious draughts of rum. . . .

"Toward night the huge camp becomes again resonant with a more intense babel of sounds. The lucky winner on the race-course parades his gains, and depicts in graphic pantomime his share in the sports; while the loser bewails his losses in maudlin tones, or arranges the terms of a new race for the morrow. The betting of the afternoon is succeeded by the deeper gambling of the evening; and the sounds of shuffling cards, the clinking of the buttons and bullets of the moccasin-game, and the exclamations of triumph and despair of winner and loser,

are everywhere heard. Rum flows freely; for each hunter brings a supply to tide him over the grand encampment, and start him fairly on his journey. As the night advances, the camp grows more and more boisterous, the confusion worse confounded. The women disappear from the camp-fires, and betake themselves to tents out of harm's way. Drunken men reel about the flaming fires; wild yells fill the still air; quarrels are engendered; fierce invectives in many tongues roll from angry lips, and the saturnalia becomes general. The camp-fires light up the strange scene with a lurid glare, and tent, cart, and awning, cast fantastic shadows over all. The orgy continues late in the night, and, when the fires flicker and die out, their last feeble glow reveals shadowy forms stretched promiscuously about, sleeping the sleep of drunkenness."

On the day before setting out all the men would meet together and select a chief, counselors, captains, and guides. A code of rules would be drawn up by the chief and counselors. These rules usually prohibited any one from lagging behind or leaving the main body and invariably forbade any person or party from running buffalo before the general order was given under which all could participate. This last rule was partly intended to prevent the buffaloes from being frightened out of the country by the precipitate action of a few individuals.

On the morning of the appointed day the cavalcade of carts and horsemen, miles long, set out southwestward over the rolling prairie toward the hunting grounds. "Along the line of march are scattered the four captains of the guard, who, with their men, keep order in the line. Here rides on a sleek runner the average hunter, in corduroy and capote, bronzed, sparsely bearded, volatile, and given to much gesticulation; next, an Indian,

pure and simple, crouched upon the back of his shaggy, unkempt pony, without saddle, and using a single cord as bridle—a blanketed, hatless, 'grave and reverend seignior,' speaking but seldom, and then only in monosyllables; then a sandy-haired and canny Scot, clad in homespun, and with keen gray eyes wide open for the main chance, eager for trade, but reckless and daring as any hunter of them all, bestriding a large-boned, well-accoutred animal, and riding it like a heavy dragoon; here, again, a pink-cheeked sprig of English nobility, doing the hunt from curiosity, and carefully watched over by a numerous retinue of servants and retainers. He has in his outfit all the latest patterns of arms, the most comprehensive camp-chests, and *impedimenta* enough for a full company of plain-hunters. From every covered cart in the long train peer the dusky faces of Phyllis and Thisbe, sometimes chatting gaily with the tawny cavaliers riding alongside; again engaged in quieting the demonstrations of a too lively progeny. . . . Everywhere there is a glint of polished gun-barrels, a floating of parti-colored sashes, a reckless careering to and fro, a wild dash and scurry, a waving of blankets, shouts, dust, noise, and confusion."

As the days pass the cavalcade may come upon small bands of buffalo feeding, but the rule against firing at them is strictly enforced. The object is to find the main herds, so that all may participate with equal chances and a great slaughter be accomplished. However, the longing for fresh meat occasionally proves too strong for hungry half-breeds, and a curious plan that does not infringe the rules is resorted to. Two well mounted hunters take a long rawhide rope, isolate a fat cow from the herd, entangle her legs in the rope so that she falls to

the ground, and then they dispatch her with knives. The meat thus obtained furnishes variety and may also relieve actual hunger, for generally some of the hunters start on the trip without a sufficient supply of food.

Meanwhile, the scouts have been scouring the country to right and left and ahead in search of the main herds. A day comes when a lucky scout returns with word that he has discovered one of them. The cavalcade turns in the direction he indicates, being careful to keep to windward of the herd, and camp is made in some depression of the prairie not too close to the quarry. Guns are cleaned and examined, powder-flasks and bullet-pouches filled, saddles and bridles overhauled, and the best buffalo-runners are made ready. These valuable animals have been carefully cared for to be in readiness for the next day.

Before break of day next morning the hunters mount and ride toward the herd. Advantage is taken of any bits of rising ground to approach as closely as possible. Finally when all is ready the chief of the hunt shouts, "*Allez! allez!*" A thousand reckless riders dash forward at a wild gallop. The buffaloes break away at a speed that is surprisingly swift for so cumbersome a beast, but the hunters are soon at the outskirts of the herd. Guns flash and roar, the wild yells of the eager hunters mingle with the hoarse bellows of wounded bulls, the dust rises in vast clouds, and the chase sweeps rapidly over the rolling prairie, leaving behind it many dead or mortally wounded buffaloes. Here, too, a pony has put his foot in a prairie dog's hole and has fallen, pitching his rider over his head. The half-breed has risen and while rubbing his own bruises contemplates ruefully his pony's broken leg.

In shooting it is the custom to ride close up to a buffalo, place the muzzle of the gun almost against his hide, and fire without taking much aim. A shot in the short ribs ranging forward is a favorite one, and, if well placed, will soon bring the animal to the ground. The backbone is an even more deadly spot but is harder to hit. For the most part the hunters are using smooth-bore, flintlock guns. When they wish to reload they drop a handful of powder in the muzzle, take a bullet out of their mouths, and let it fall upon the powder; no patching is used, and the bullets are made small enough readily to roll in or out. A tap of the butt against the saddle will usually prime the weapon, and it is ready for use. Care must then be exercised to keep the muzzle pointing up else the bullet will roll out, and the muzzle must be depressed only an instant in taking aim. Occasionally the bullets roll nearly to the muzzle and a bursted gun results when the weapon is fired, but this is not likely to take place unless the powder charge is too heavy. In every great hunt some man is more or less injured by such an explosion, and there are dozens of men who have lost fingers or thumbs or even a hand in this way.

Behind the hunters follow the women and children with the heavy wooden carts, skinning and cutting up the game. The men, too, presently return from chasing the herd and help in the work. In a surprisingly short time the plain is strewn with skeletons stripped of their flesh. Some of the best of the meat is taken home in its natural state, for the weather is now so cool that the meat will keep indefinitely. Much of it, however, is dried in the sun or over fires, and a great deal is made into pemmican.

In making pemmican the meat is first cut into thin slices and dried. It is then pounded into shreds with

Photograph by Horetzky

On the Great Plains near the Elbow of the Saskatchewan

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flails or between two stones. Bags of buffalo hide, with the hair outside, have been prepared, and each of these is half filled with the pounded meat. The tallow of the animals has meanwhile been boiled in huge kettles, and this is poured, while still hot, into the bags. The contents are then thoroughly mixed, after which more fat is poured on top. The bags are then sewed up, and the contents allowed to cool. Such a bag will weigh about a hundred pounds. It is highly nutritious and will keep indefinitely if it is not allowed to become damp. It is the main traveling provision throughout the great Fur Land, and it is always in demand at the Hudson's Bay posts.

The night following the hunt is spent in feasting. Incredible are the quantities of tongues, savory ribs, and melting hump consumed. If wood is abundant, the fires glare against the darkness, and the plains resound with sounds of merriment.

Sometimes enough buffaloes are killed in a single hunt to answer all purposes. At all events a day comes when the hunting party turns homeward, the wooden carts creaking beneath the weight of meat and robes.

For more than half a century these great hunts of the Red River half-breeds continued. Many of the buffalo robes and much of the pemmican used by the great fur company were thus obtained. Each year thousands of buffaloes were slain, yet little impression was made upon the teeming millions. It was not until railways to the Pacific were built across the plains that the ravages of skin hunters finally brought the buffaloes to virtual extinction.

When that time came, the great hunts ceased, of course. Some of the descendants of the half-breeds who

engaged in them still live upon the banks of the Red River and the Assiniboine. Others are rivermen, trappers, lumbermen, and one meets them throughout the whole of the great Northwest. Wherever they may be, they still retain their love for streams and lakes and the forest primeval.

CHAPTER XI

FURTHER SIDELIGHTS ON INDIAN LIFE

THE various Indian tribes were almost constantly engaged in war with each other. Even in times of so-called "peace" hostilities might flare up at any moment. In times of war watch had to be constantly kept against enemies, and scouts were always on the lookout for prowling hostile bands. The main objects in warfare were to steal horses, take scalps, or get a wife. Horses were valuable, and besides it was much more exciting and honorable to steal a horse than to rear or buy it. As for scalps, among some tribes a young fellow was hardly esteemed a warrior until he had torn a gory trophy from the head of an enemy. To obtain such a trophy the average Indian would murder a woman or a child as remorselessly as he would a man. If a young and pretty squaw fell into his hands, however, he would be likely, if it were possible, to carry her home with him as a concubine or wife.

After all, however, in their fondness for war the Indians did not differ greatly from more "civilized" peoples. A missionary once remonstrated with an assemblage of Crees because of their unceasing warfare against their red neighbors.

"My friend, what you say is good," replied a Cree chieftain; "but look, you are a white man and Christian, we are red men and worship the Manitou; but what is the news we hear from the traders and the blackrobes?

Is it not always the news of war? The Kitchi-Mokans (i.e. the Americans) are on the war-path against their brethren of the South, the English are fighting some tribes far away over the big lake; the French, and all the other tribes, are fighting too! My brother, it is news of war, always news of war! and we—we go on the war-path in small numbers. We stop when we kill a few of our enemies and take a few scalps; but your nations go to war in countless thousands, and we hear of more of your braves killed in one battle than all our tribe numbers together. So, my brother, do not say to us that it is wrong to go on the war-path, for what is the right of the white man cannot be wrong in his red brother. I have done! "

The Rocky Mountain House, which stood in a thick pine forest on the bank of the northern branch of the Saskatchewan in the eastern foothills of the Rockies, was a post where trading was likely to be dangerous. The tribes that resorted thither were the Blackfeet, Crees, Sarcees, and Mountain Assiniboines, and they were not only often fighting each other but not infrequently they would attack the white traders. Every possible device of palisades, bars, locks, sliding-doors, and loopholes for firing down upon the Indians was employed. The following picture of trading at this post is taken from Robinson's *The Great Fur Land:*

" When the Blackfeet have accumulated a sufficient number of peltries to warrant a visit to the Rocky-Mountain House, two or three envoys, or forerunners, are chosen, and are sent in advance of the main body, by a week or more, to announce their approach and notify the officers in charge of the quantity of provisions, peltries, robes, horses, etc., which they will have to dispose

of; and also to ascertain the whereabouts of their hereditary enemies, the Crees and Mountain Assiniboines. The envoys prepare for state visits of this nature by an assumption of their gaudiest apparel, and a more than usual intensity of paint; scarlet leggings and blankets; abundance of ribbons in the cap, if any be worn, or the head-band trimmed with beads and porcupine quills, while the bulk of the cap is made of the plumage of birds; again, a single feather from the wing of an eagle or white-bird, fastened in the scalp-lock, or the hair plaited in a long cue behind, and two shorter ones hanging down on each side in front, each bound with coils of bright brass wire; round the eyes a halo of bright vermilion, a streak down the nose, a patch on each cheek, and a circle round the mouth of the same color, constitute the effective head-gear of the advance-agents. The remainder of the costume is modified by climate and seasons. In the summer they are almost naked, seldom wearing more than the *azain*, or loin-cloth. In the colder months they wear clothing made of the skins of wild animals, dressed, or with the fur on. . . .

"Upon arriving at the post, the envoys are received and handsomely entertained by the officer in charge, who makes them presents according to their rank, and in proportion to the anticipated value of the trade. They are feasted, smoked, and, upon occasion, wined to a considerable extent. . . .

"Within the fort a searching examination is made of the efficient workings of all bolts, locks, gratings, etc., and of the closing of all means of communication between the Indian room—a large apartment in which the Blackfeet assemble previous to being admitted into the trading-store—and the rest of the buildings; guns are newly

cleaned, reloaded, and placed, together with abundant ammunition, by the numerous loop-holes in the lofts above the trading and Indian room. From the shelves of the former are taken most of the blankets, colored cloths, guns, ammunition, ribbons, bright handkerchiefs, beads, etc., the staple commodities of the Indian trade, with a view of decreasing the excitement under which the red-man always labors when brought into immediate jutaxposition with so much bravery—an excitement which renders him oblivious to furnishing an equivalent in exchange, and tends to foster his habits of forcible seizure. Preparations are also made within the stockade for the reception of the ponies to be purchased, and their safe-keeping afterward, for the Blackfoot's fine sense of humor frequently leads him to ride away an animal he has just sold, by way of practical joke upon the owner."

The Indian room and the trading room were connected by a narrow passage, each end of which was closed by a heavy door. Only two Indians were admitted into the trading room at a time, and this was done with great care. The passage door into the Indian room was opened and two braves were permitted to pass through, after which this door was closed and locked; the other door was then opened, and the Indians were permitted to pass into the trading room. Thus one door was always kept shut, so that there could be no sudden rush into the trading room. Even that room itself was divided into two parts: in one were the traders and their goods, in the other the Indians, and there was only a square aperture between, and way through this was barred by a grating which left openings sufficiently large for the passage of a blanket or a robe. This last precaution was partly to prevent the Indians from handling and soiling the goods,

partly to prevent them, in case of disagreement, from attempting to kill the traders. If, in spite of all these precautions, the Indians either in the trading room or Indian room grew so violent as to be really dangerous, the traders could fire down upon them from loopholes in the ceiling. Robinson continues:

"A somewhat amusing illustration of the universal passion for dress, which forms a distinguishing characteristic of the Blackfeet, equally with other Indians, occurs in these trades. The fashionable costume of the red-man is not generally regulated by the variable moods of the mercurial Parisian; indeed it has undergone but little change since the memory of men. Certain interesting specimens of the race are said to have been seen attired in even less than the vaunted Mexican costume—a shirt-collar and a pair of spurs. We ourselves remember to have seen one chastely appareled in a stove-pipe hat. But it frequently occurs, during the trades, that some doughty chieftain elects to appear in more than regal magnificence before his tribe; and for his benefit, and those of similar tastes, the Company annually import certain ancient costumes prevalent in England some half-century since. The tall, stove-pipe hat, with round narrow brim; the snuff-brown or bright-blue coat, with high collar, climbing up over the neck, the sleeves tightly fitting, the waist narrow—this is the Blackfeet's ideal of perfection in dress, and the brave who can array himself in this antique garb struts out from the fort the envy and admiration of all beholders. Often the high hat is ornamented with a decayed ostrich-plume, drooping like the shadow of a great sorrow, which has figured in the turban of some dowager of the British Isles long years since. While the presence of trousers is considered by

no means essential to the perfect finish of the costume, the addition of a narrow band of gold lace about the coat is regarded as imparting an air of tone to the general effect not to be obtained in any other way. For such a costume the Blackfeet brave will barter his deer-skin, beaded, quilled, and ornamented with the raven locks of his enemies; his head-band of beautiful feathers and shells; and the soft-tanned and flowing robe of buffalo-skin—a dress which adds a kingly dignity to his athletic form for one which *Pantaloon* would scorn to wear. Fortunately, the new dress does not long survive. Little by little it is found unsuited to the wild life which its owner leads, and, although never losing the originally high estimate placed upon it, is discarded at length by reason of the many inconveniences arising from running buffalo in a plug-hat and fighting in a swallow-tail coat against the Crees. . . .

"A liquor trade generally began with a present of fire-water all round. Then business went on apace. After an Indian had taken his first drink, it was a matter of little difficulty to obtain all he had in exchange for spirits. Horses, robes, tents, provisions—all would be proffered for one more dram of the beloved poison. As the trade advanced it degenerated into a complete orgy. Nothing could exceed the excitement inside the room, except it was the excitement outside—for only a limited number of the thirsty crowd could obtain entrance at a time. There the anxious braves could only learn by hearsay what was going on within. Now and then a brave, with an amount of self-abnegation worthy of a better cause, would issue from the fort, with his cheeks distended and his mouth full of rum, and going along the ranks of his friends he would squirt a little of the liquor into the open

Photographed near Calgary in 1901

Plains Indians

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mouths of his less fortunate brethren. There were times, however, when matters did not go on so peaceably. Knives were wont to flash and shots to be fired, and the walls of the Indian rooms at many of the forts show frequent traces of bullet-marks and knife hacking, done in the wild fury of the intoxicated savage."

Belief in the supernatural was prevalent among all the Indians, and fear of invisible powers played an extremely important part in their lives. In practically every band there was at least one medicine man. This person was usually a sort of compound of physician, priest, and conjurer. With some knowledge of the medical properties of roots and herbs he might combine skill as a juggler and a pretense at being able to commune with good and evil spirits. Some medicine men were well meaning, occasionally even useful; others were crafty, cruel, designing rascals, who used their real and pretended power to terrify others into doing what the medicine man willed. Most pretended to be able to cast spells over others. Some were diabolical poisoners who kept all about them in a state of terror.

Every medicine man performed mysterious incantations, and each had his "medicine bag." These bags were often made out of the skin of some unborn animal. Their contents were extremely varied: dried roots and herbs, colored powders, talons and claws of birds, feathers, snake and frog skins, human finger and toe nails, human hair, carved images of beasts and birds. The articles would probably be tied up separately in skins or birchbark and labeled with totemic symbols.

Though accustomed to impose upon the ignorance of others, the medicine men were themselves often credulous. Joke-loving white men now and then had fun at their

expense. Occasionally this fun took an unexpected direction. The author of *The Great Fur Land* relates that on a winter's day a number of Indians came to his house to beg for food. "Among them were several noted conjurers. Some freak of curiosity tempted us to try how far their belief in the supernatural would carry them; and, having a large music box in our possession, it was wound up and placed unnoticed upon the table. In a moment it began playing, and the notes of 'Bonnie Doon,' 'The Lass o' Gowrie,' etc., resounded through the apartment. At its first chords the faces of the savages assumed a wondering, dazed expression. But, quickly recovering from that phase of amazement, they began to trace the sound to its origin. After some minutes of deep attention, one old man evidently discovered the source, and without a moment's hesitation raised his gun and fired it at the box. It is perhaps unnecessary to mention that the instrument was, to use a nautical expression, 'a total wreck.' The conjurer asserted that the music was produced by an evil spirit concealed in the box, and could only be driven out by a gunshot. Our curiosity was satisfied, but at a considerable expense."

The Assiniboines, Blackfeet, and other northwestern tribes frequently built pounds into which they would drive the buffaloes. These pounds varied in size according to circumstances and the number of Indians who engaged in the enterprise. The inclosure was made of logs laid one upon the other and interwoven with branches and twigs. The entrance was usually about ten paces wide and always fronted upon the open prairie. From each side of the entrance diverging lines of stakes or brush were erected; these lines were made impenetrable at first but at some distance from the pound they

consisted merely of occasional stakes or bundles of brush.

When the pound was ready and conditions were propitious, young braves were sent out to drive in the buffaloes. This was a task that required much patience, for the animals must be started and driven slowly. Sometimes the work was partly done by starting small fires of grass or buffalo chips. Success was most likely when the wind blew toward the pound. Having brought the buffaloes within the lines of stakes and brush, the Indians usually hurried the herd on more rapidly, while a swift runner wearing a buffalo robe over his head would appear ahead of them, and imitating a buffalo as well as he could, make toward the entrance. If all went well, the simple-minded quarry would follow this guide. Sometimes a trained pony would play this part. An Indian sentinel was always on the lookout, and when a herd appeared in sight, he would notify the village, and every warrior, squaw, and child able to run would hurry to a position such that by waving their robes they could prevent the buffaloes from taking the wrong direction. On reaching the entrance the buffaloes would tumble in pell-mell behind the guide, and some would usually break their legs or necks jumping in, as the entrance was usually so constructed that there was a descent of at least six or eight feet. When the animals were inside, the entrance, if necessary, was blocked up with logs or brush, and the warriors then took up favorable positions on the inclosure and let fly their arrows until the last buffalo was slain. The squaws then entered the pound and did the work of butchering. Usually only the fattest cows and calves were used; the thin cows and the tough old bulls were left for the dogs, which hung round the pound in droves.

In February, 1776, Alexander Henry the Elder accompanied some Assiniboines in what is now Manitoba and saw them kill many buffaloes, which he calls oxen, in such a pound.

"In the morning," says he, "we went to the hunt accordingly. The chief was followed by about forty men and a great number of women. We proceeded to a small island [of timber] on the plain, at the distance of five miles from the village. On our way we saw large herds of oxen at feed, but the hunters forbore to molest them lest they take the alarm.

"Arrived at the island, the women pitched a few tents, while the chief led his hunters to its southern end, where there was a pound or inclosure. The fence was about four feet high, and formed of strong stakes of birch-wood, wattled with smaller branches of the same. The day was spent in making repairs, and by the evening all was ready for the hunt.

"At daylight several of the more expert hunters were sent to decoy the animals into the pound. They were dressed in ox skins, with the hair and horns. Their faces were covered, and their gestures so closely resembled those of the animals themselves that, had I not been in the secret, I should have been as much deceived as the oxen.

"At ten o'clock one of the hunters returned, bringing information of the herd. Immediately all the dogs were muzzled; and, this done, the whole crowd of men and women surrounded the outside of the pound. The herd, of which the extent was so great that I cannot pretend to estimate the numbers, was distant half a mile, advancing slowly, and frequently stopping to feed. The part played by the decoyers was that of approaching

them within hearing and then bellowing like themselves. On hearing the noise, the oxen did not fail to give it attention, and, whether from curiosity or sympathy, advanced to meet those from whom it proceeded. These, in the meantime, fell back deliberately toward the pound, always repeating the call whenever the oxen stopped. This was reiterated till the leaders of the herd had followed the decoyers into the jaws of the pound, which, though wide asunder toward the plain, terminated, like a funnel, in a small aperture or gateway, and within this was the pound itself. The Indians remark that in all herds of animals there are chiefs, or leaders, by whom the motions of the rest are determined.

"The decoyers now retired within the pound, and were followed by the oxen. But the former retired still further, withdrawing themselves at certain movable parts of the fence, while the latter were fallen upon by the hunters and presently wounded or killed by showers of arrows. Amid the uproar which ensued the oxen made several attempts to force the fence, but the Indians stopped them and drove them back by shaking skins before their eyes. Skins were also made use of to stop the entrance, being let down by strings as soon as the oxen were inside. The slaughter was prolonged till the evening, when the hunters returned to their tents. Next morning all the tongues were presented to the chief, to the number of seventy-two.

"The women brought the meat to the village on sledges drawn by dogs. The lumps on the shoulders, and the hearts, as well as the tongues, were set apart for feasts, while the rest was consumed as ordinary food, or dried, for sale at the fort."

Occasionally, instead of building a pound, the Indians,

riding on horseback, would drive a buffalo herd over a high cliff. On reaching the edge of the cliff the leaders of the doomed animals would often try to stop, but would be pushed over by those behind, and all, or nearly all, would go plunging over the brink to destruction. Hundreds of animals would sometimes be piled up in one great heap of dead, while many others, though not instantly killed, would suffer broken legs or other serious injuries. Often so many animals were killed that most would be left to the coyotes, wolves, vultures, and bears, and the air for miles around would be poisoned with the noxious effluvia from the rotting carcasses.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRAGIC VOYAGES OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

A FEW years after the close of the Napoleonic wars the British government determined to send out an expedition to explore the coast of the Arctic Ocean eastward from the mouth of the Coppermine River, the point reached nearly forty years before by Hearne.

The man selected for the task was John Franklin, a captain in the Royal Navy. Franklin was at that time thirty-three years old, and was a man of culture and ability along scientific lines, but he had never before had any experience in wilderness travel. To accompany him the Admiralty selected a surgeon named John Richardson, and two midshipmen, George Back and Robert Hood. A more humble member of the expedition was an energetic and faithful seaman named John Hepburn.

Both Hood and Back were artists of some ability and were to make drawings of the country and the natives. Dr. Richardson, in addition to looking after the health of the members of the expedition, was to act as naturalist. Besides mapping the Arctic coast, Franklin and his associates were to examine the copper deposits seen by Hearne and were to study such natural phenomena as the Aurora Borealis and the variation of the magnetic compass. At that time the Magnetic Pole had not yet been located. We know now that it is situated on the peninsula of Boothia Felix northwest of Hudson Bay.

In May, 1819, the party left England on board a ship

belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. They narrowly escaped being cast away on the barren coast of Labrador, and it was not until the 30th of August that their ship, still leaking badly, cast anchor off York Factory. Six weeks of hard travel by way of the Nelson River, Lake Winnipeg, and the Saskatchewan brought them to Cumberland House, one of the main fur posts in the northwest. Thence they made the long and arduous trip to Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca by dog sledge.

Both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company had instructed their agents to render Franklin's party every assistance in their power, but ruinous competition between these two companies had reduced their stocks of goods at the remote posts, while an epidemic of measles and whooping cough had swept over the northwest carrying off many of the Indians and weakening the rest so that they had not brought to the posts as much meat as formerly. When the expedition left Chipewyan in July, 1820, it was poorly provided in goods, and its stock of provisions did not amount to more than one day's rations, exclusive of two barrels of flour, three cases of preserved meats, some chocolate, arrowroot, and portable soup, which were intended for use along the Arctic coast.

The party consisted of Franklin, Dr. Richardson, Hood, Back, Hepburn, sixteen Canadian voyageurs, and a Chipewyan squaw. Subsequently at Great Slave Lake they were joined by a fur trader named Wenzel and by two French-Canadian interpreters named St. Germain and Adam. It had been difficult to obtain volunteers for the expedition, and some of the men who finally consented to go were of poor quality. Furthermore, the

expedition was much too large, considering that it must live almost entirely off the country.

At first, however, things went reasonably well. Many fish were caught, some game was killed, and considerable other food was obtained at posts along the way. Leaving Great Slave Lake, they ascended a stream known as the Yellow Knife River and made a series of portages to a lake which formed one of the headwaters of the Coppermine River. Here they established a post called Fort Enterprise and spent the winter. Aided by a band of Indians under a chief named Akaitcho, they were able to obtain sufficient fish and game to live reasonably well. Back and Wenzel, with two Canadians and two Indian hunters and their wives, made a thousand-mile winter journey back to Chipewyan and returned with mail from the outside world and rather meager supplies of ammunition and other supplies. The fact that the expedition was poorly provided with goods made a bad impression on the Indians and doubtless had something to do with bringing on subsequent misfortunes that befell the expedition.

In June the explorers, aided by the Indians, proceeded to the Coppermine River and began the descent of that stream. They were accompanied by two Eskimos, named Augustus and Junius, who had made the long journey from Hudson Bay by way of Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan, and the Mackenzie in order to act as interpreters in case the explorers should meet some of their people on the Arctic coast. The expedition was still badly equipped in many respects and was almost wholly dependent for food upon what could be killed or caught.

Franklin was extremely anxious to establish friendly relations with the Eskimos, and when the expedition

neared Bloody Falls he sent Augustus and Junius ahead to carry presents to their countrymen and to tell them that the white men desired to make peace between them and their enemies the Indians. The ambassadors found a band of Eskimos at the falls and entered into talk with them, but the inopportune arrival of the rest of the party alarmed the wild Eskimos and they fled down the river, leaving most of their goods behind them.

At the falls Franklin noticed several human skulls that bore marks of violence and also many other bones, and he decided that these were relics of the massacre witnessed by Hearne nearly forty years before.

Subsequently more Eskimos were seen, and friendly relations were established with an aged couple whose infirmities prevented them from escaping. However, the rest of the Eskimos were in such terror of the Indians who were with Franklin's party that they fled into the wilderness. Furthermore, the Indians themselves became alarmed and set off up the Coppermine in a panic, but not before they had promised to provide a deposit of meat at Fort Enterprise. Wenzel and four of the voyageurs were also sent back from this place. St. Germain and Adam, the two interpreters, and most of the other voyageurs were also anxious to return, prophesying disasters ahead, but this Franklin would not permit.

The party was now reduced to twenty persons in two large birchbark canoes. The number was still too large to be certain of obtaining a livelihood off the country. Twenty men require a great deal of food to sustain them, and unfortunately only two of the party, namely the interpreters, St. Germain and Adam, were dependable as hunters. The Englishmen, though brave, had no skill in that line, nor, if the truth must be told, much resource-

fulness in the battle with the wilderness. In the language of a later day they were "tenderfeet." Even most of the French Canadians, though good boatmen, were not well fitted for the trials ahead.

During the latter part of July and the first half of August the explorers cruised eastward along the irregular Arctic coast; being often delayed by movements of the ice. Franklin hoped all the while to find Eskimos from whom he could obtain provisions, but, though many traces of these people were noticed along the coast, no more of the Eskimos themselves were seen. Some fish were caught and caribou, waterfowl, and other game were killed, but the explorers were frequently forced to make use of the scanty stock of dried meat and other provisions they carried with them.

Finally, south of Point Turnagain, on the eastern shore of the bay named Coronation Gulf by Franklin, the explorers turned back. They did not attempt to return by way of the Coppermine, but instead ascended a stream called by Franklin Hood's River, intending to follow it to its source and then strike southeastward across country to Fort Enterprise. So many rapids and falls were soon met with that two small canoes, each capable of carrying three persons, were made out of the larger craft, and some of the baggage was abandoned. The explorers followed Hood's River a few days more and then, leaving it, struck off southwestward for the fort, distant in a straight line less than one hundred and fifty miles. They took with them the small canoes for use in crossing any rivers or lakes they might come upon.

It was still early in September, but already, in that far northern country, winter was at hand. The land was

treeless, and the moss upon which they were dependent for fuel was often too wet to burn. At first they were lucky enough to kill a few caribou and musk-oxen, but they were delayed by storms and the men were improvident in the use of food. One of the canoes was so badly damaged, probably purposely by the men who carried it, that it was used on September 8th to cook the last of the arrow-root and portable soup, the first meal the explorers had had for three days. In the next two days a few ptarmigan were killed, and the party also began to gather and cook a sort of lichen called by the Canadians *tripe de roche*. This last dish helped to satisfy the cravings of hunger, but there was little nutriment in it, and it did some of the men more harm than good, as it upset their stomachs. Another thing to which the party had recourse was the shrub known as Labrador tea, from the twigs of which they made a beverage that helped to revive their courage.

On September 10th they came upon a herd of musk-oxen grazing in a valley, but the hunt was badly managed, and only one, a cow, was killed. She afforded them the first real meal they had had for six days. Even the intestines and the contents of the stomach were devoured.

Next day they were forced to remain in camp by a snowstorm. They restricted themselves to a single meal, yet even then had only meat for one more day. In the morning, though the gale was still strong, they set out through snow two feet deep. By night they were much worn out, nor did the musk-ox meat seem to have helped them much. Next day they had nothing to eat save *tripe de roche* and a single ptarmigan and had the misfortune to come upon a large lake, which stretched away for many miles right across their path. Franklin now

made the discovery that the French Canadians had thrown away three of the fishing nets and burnt the floats; the loss was a grave one, for with the nets it might have been possible to catch many fish. The men were, in fact, for the most part thoughtless, wasteful, and rebellious. Next morning, however, one of them, Perrault, kindly gave to the half-starved officers a piece of meat which he had saved from his own allowance.

Later in the day one of the hunters killed two caribou, but in crossing a river the canoe was upset, and one of the men was nearly drowned. Next day another caribou was killed, but there were so many mouths to fill that the meat was soon consumed. Several starving days followed during which the party made its way slowly through rough country, greatly impeded by the snow and being often forced to pass the nights in wet clothes shivering in a fireless camp. The men were now straggling badly, and on September 22d the second canoe was left behind by the men who had it in charge. Starvation was so great that when the men found the bones and a little of the skin of a caribou that had been killed by wolves the preceding spring they ate them, having first rendered the bones friable by burning. Scraps of leather and worn-out moccasins were also consumed.

On September 25th five small caribou were killed. With proper management the meat thus obtained would have lasted some time, but it was all divided equally, and some of the men consumed a third of their share the first day. Some ate so much, in fact, that they were made ill and were weakened in consequence. After resting a day the party moved onward and came to the Coppermine River at a place where the current was very swift. Despairing of crossing, they followed the river until they

came to a large lake. They attempted to get round this but came to an arm stretching to the northeastward and, after wasting much time and effort, turned back to the river. The rotten carcass of a deer was found and eagerly devoured. Some of the meat belonging to the officers was stolen by the men and eaten by them. Occasionally, too, the men would shoot ptarmigan and would eat them surreptitiously instead of adding them to the common stock.

On the shore of this lake Junius, one of the Eskimos, became separated from the rest of the party, owing to their turning back, and he was not seen again. As he had a gun, ammunition, a small kettle, and other necessaries, Franklin hoped that he would follow the course of the Coppermine until he reached some of his own people. Probably, however, he died in the wilderness.

When they got back to the river, the party made a raft of bundles of small willows. But the willows were green, and the raft had such little buoyancy that it would support only one man. The current was exceedingly swift, the wind blew strongly from across the river, and repeated attempts to cross failed. Finally Dr. Richardson tried to swim the stream with a line and haul the raft across. Just before starting he stepped on a knife, which cut his foot to the bone. He nearly reached the opposite bank but then became so benumbed by the icy water that he sank out of sight. He was dragged back to shore and was pulled out upon the bank in an almost lifeless condition. His wet clothes were taken off, and he was laid before a fire. But the mistake was made of putting him too close, and one of his sides was so badly burned that he did not recover from the effects until the following summer.

The sight of his naked body had a painful effect upon all who saw it. "*Ah, que nous sommes maigres!*—Oh, how lean we are!" cried the Canadians when they beheld his emaciated frame.

Two more days were lost at this place, but finally the party managed to cross the river in a canoe made out of willows and some painted canvas in which the bedding had been wrapped. The food supply was by this time again exhausted. Hunger, cold, and despair brought almost all to a state of pitiable weakness. On October 4th Franklin sent Back, St. Germain, and two French Canadians ahead with instructions to hurry to Fort Enterprise and return with food.

Next day the main party followed painfully after, toiling through the deep snow, pausing often from exhaustion, and now and then falling down. The men straggled a great deal, and only six miles were made the whole day. Next day the route lay over a range of rough, black hills. The wind blew strong, the air was piercing cold. Two of the men became exhausted and had to be abandoned. The survivors spent a miserable night in a patch of small willows, unable to build a fire large enough to warm themselves or even to thaw out their moccasins. At noon next day they reached a rather extensive thicket of willows near which there was a supply of *tripe de roche* growing on the face of the rocks. Hood, who was very weak, remained here, with Dr. Richardson and faithful John Hepburn. Most of what baggage remained was also left at this place, and the tent was pitched for those remaining behind.

Later in the day the main party reached some spruce woods, but camped beyond them. Next morning two of the men, Belanger and Michel, pleading weakness,

obtained permission to return to the tent. Michel was an Iroquois Indian. The rest had not gone far before another man, Perrault, burst into tears and turned back to the camp, which was only a quarter of a mile distant. Later in the day still another man, an Italian named Fontano, also turned back. Augustus, the Eskimo, became impatient and went ahead by himself.

Only four other men now remained with Franklin. For three days, without any other food than *tripe de roche,* Labrador tea, and a few scraps of leather, they struggled onward through the deep snow. At last, more dead than alive, they at last reached the fond haven of their hopes, Fort Enterprise, only to meet an awful disappointment. The place was entirely desolate. There was no deposit of provisions, and no trace either of Wenzel or the Indians. There was, however, a note from Back to the effect that he had gone in search of the Indians and that, if he failed to find them, he would endeavor to obtain assistance at distant Fort Providence on Great Bear Lake.

The shock of disappointment was more than the poor fellows could bear. "The whole party," says Franklin, "shed tears, not so much for our own fate, as for that of our friends in the rear, whose lives depended entirely on our sending immediate relief from this place."

The same day Augustus, the Eskimo, reached the fort, and a few days later Franklin sent him and Benoit in search of the Indians. Meanwhile, Franklin and his comrades lived off *tripe de roche* and scraps of skins and bones that had been thrown on the dump heap the winter before. Of course, such food contained little nourishment. The bones were so acrid that soup made from them made the mouths of those who ate it sore.

One day while the four men, two of whom were now too weak to walk, were sitting before the fire talking about the possibility of relief coming, two men entered, each carrying a pack. They were Dr. Richardson and Hepburn, whom Franklin had not seen for twenty-two days.

"Upon entering the now desolate building," says Dr. Richardson, "we had the satisfaction of embracing Captain Franklin, but no words can convey an idea of the filth and wretchedness that met our eyes on looking around. Our own misery had stolen upon us by degrees, and we were accustomed to the contemplation of each other's emaciated figures, but the ghastly countenances, dilated eye-balls, and sepulchral voices of Captain Franklin and those with him were more than we could at first bear."

However, Dr. Richardson and Hepburn had passed through experiences far more horrible than those which had fallen to the lot of Franklin. The day following the parting had been so stormy that the doctor, Hood, and Hepburn, weak and wretched, had remained in the tent all day. The next day Michel, the Iroquois, came to the camp with word that there was a clump of spruce trees ahead which would furnish fuel, and he said that his companion, Belanger, had started out earlier than he and must have been lost. Michel had killed a rabbit and a ptarmigan, which he shared with the others. During the next two days the men moved their camp to the pines, and Michel spent much time hunting. On the third day the Iroquois brought in some meat, which he said he had taken from a wolf that had been killed while attacking a caribou.

The others accepted his story and ate of the meat, but

later events convinced them that in reality it was part of the body of either Belanger or Perrault. The supposition is that the Iroquois had killed Belanger soon after Franklin's party left them and that when Perrault became exhausted and came back the Indian had then killed him to conceal his crime.

For some days Michel continued to hunt or pretend to hunt, spending much of the time away from camp. At such times he doubtless was partaking of cannibalistic feasts. He grew more and more moody and surly. One day while the doctor was away gathering *tripe de roche* and Hepburn was cutting firewood they heard a shot and on returning to camp found Hood dead with a bullet hole through his head. Michel said that the dead man had committed suicide, but on examining the wound the doctor found that the bullet had entered from behind and that the gun had been applied so close that Hood's night-cap had been set on fire.

The Iroquois kept close to the others to prevent them from talking over the tragedy, and they, in their weak state, felt at his mercy. Three days later they started for the fort, and in the afternoon the Indian left them and thus gave the doctor and Hepburn an opportunity to discuss their suspicions. The upshot of the matter was that when Michel returned Dr. Richardson "put an end to his life by shooting him through the head with a pistol."

Before starting for the fort the doctor and Hepburn had eaten a few ptarmigan, which Michel had killed, but from that time on for many days, unless they ate of the dead man, they had no food except lichens, a little leather, and the spine of a caribou that had been dead many months. From the last they "extracted the spinal

marrow, which, even in its frozen state, was so acrid as to excoriate the lips."

When near the fort, Hepburn killed a ptarmigan, and this was the only food they brought to Franklin and his three comrades. The doctor tore out the feathers, held the bird before the fire a few minutes, and then divided it into six portions.

"I and my three companions ravenously devoured our shares," writes Franklin, "as it was the first morsel of flesh any of us had tasted for thirty-one days, unless, indeed, the small gristly particles which we found occasionally adhering to the pounded bones may be termed flesh."

Of all the party Hepburn was now the strongest, and upon him devolved most of the labor of cutting and bringing in wood. He also hunted a good deal, but, though caribou were occasionally seen near the fort, he failed to kill any. One night both Peltier and Semandré died. Adam, one of the interpreters, was near death, and a few more days would doubtless have brought an end to the lives of all, but on the 7th of November a party of Indians arrived with a supply of food.

News of the plight of the explorers had been brought to the Indian camp by Augustus, the Eskimo, and also by St. Germain, of Back's party. Back and his comrades had themselves experienced terrible hardships from hunger and cold, and one of them, Beauparlant, had died of hunger and cold.

The survivors of the expedition were taken to Fort Providence on Great Bear Lake, and with food and care gradually recovered their strength. In the spring they made their way out of the country by the way they had entered it and ultimately reached their homes in safety

thus ending one of the most tragic exploring expeditions in American history.

In 1825-26 Franklin, again accompanied by Richardson, Back, and Hepburn, made another expedition to the Arctic coast. This time, with more experienced management, there were no tragedies, and the coast line for long distances on both sides of the mouth of the Mackenzie River was traced and mapped.

Meanwhile, renewed efforts had been made by sea to solve the old riddle of the Northwest Passage. Beginning with 1818 repeated expeditions were sent out by the British Admiralty. Under such captains as John Ross, William E. Parry, and Captain James C. Ross, progress was made in mapping the maze of islands and straits to the north of North America, but no ship managed to find and sail through the long sought for passage. The most notable discovery of these years was made by an expedition in which both the Rosses participated, namely the location of the North Magnetic Pole. Its position was found to be at Cape Adelaide on the west coast of the peninsula of Boothia Felix in latitude 70° 03′ N., longitude 96° 44′ W.

The fact that the Magnetic Pole and the North Pole are not located at the same place had long been known to scientists, navigators, surveyors, etc., for, except in a few places, the compass needle does not point directly northward but varies to the east or west. When explorers got to the northward of the Magnetic Pole, the needle would, in fact, point south. At the Magnetic Pole the needle does not point either north or south but directly downward. The discovery of the exact location of the Magnetic Pole was of great importance to science and to navigation.

The expedition which discovered the Magnetic Pole was gone five years, and their long absence caused great uneasiness in England. In 1832, after three years had passed without any tidings, the government and friends of the explorers sent out a search expedition under Franklin's old lieutenant, Back. Back's party made their way to Great Slave Lake and in 1834 succeeded in descending the Great Fish River to the Arctic coast. They were already aware, however, that the men they sought had reached England in safety, and they soon returned to Great Slave Lake. In 1836 Back made an Arctic expedition in command of the *Terror*, but the ship was beset by the ice near Cape Bylot, and for ten months the explorers were subjected to the vicissitudes of the moving ice pack. When release finally came, the *Terror* was in such bad condition that she barely escaped foundering on the voyage back to England.

In 1836 the Hudson's Bay Company decided to send out an expedition "to complete the discovery and survey of the northern shores of the American continent." To lead the expedition the Company selected two of its own men, P. W. Dease and Thomas Simpson, both men of great force and determination and long experienced in Northland travel. They managed the work with great skill and avoided the mistakes that had proved fatal to so many of their inexperienced predecessors. In 1837 Simpson passed Franklin's "farthest west" and reached Point Barrow; as this point had already been attained by ships sailing from Bering Strait, Simpson thus filled in the gap that existed in the northwestern coast-line of the continent. On this occasion Dease consented to command the supporting party while the younger and more ambitious Simpson pushed ahead; the same tactics

were subsequently followed. In the next two years Simpson pushed eastward far beyond Franklin's "farthest east," reached Castor and Pollux Bay, well beyond the mouth of the Great Fish River, and explored part of Victoria Land.

These expeditions had cost comparatively little; their remarkable success was due mainly to the fact that Simpson and Dease were experienced men who *knew how*. Of all Arctic travelers of the period they were the most skilled, with the exception of Dr. John Rae, who was their peer; some account of his remarkable work will be given later. As one follows the long tale of Arctic disasters he realizes more and more that most of them were due to ignorance on the part of those who conducted them. It seems a pity that all leaders were not experienced men such as Simpson and Rae. As for Simpson he would doubtless have been sent out on another expedition, but in 1840, while in the Manitoba country, he died by violence. According to one theory he committed suicide during a moment of mental aberration in which he killed two half-breeds who were traveling with him, but it is much more probable that he became involved in a dispute with the breeds and that he was slain by the survivors.

After his second expedition to the Arctic Franklin served in various positions, among others as governor of Tasmania, but in 1845 the Admiralty decided to send out another expedition and, though he was then fifty-nine years of age, Franklin was placed in command of it. He was given two ships, the *Erebus* and *Terror*, and the main task set for him was to find and sail through the Northwest Passage.

The *Erebus* and *Terror*, with one hundred and twenty-

nine souls on board and provisions for three years, sailed from England on May 26, 1845. They reached the Arctic seas and on July 12, 1845, were seen by the crew of a whaling vessel moored to an iceberg waiting for an opening in the middle ice so as to cross Lancaster Sound. Then those on board vanished from the sight of men, and for years no tidings came as to their fate.

Uneasiness began to develop regarding the safety of the explorers as early as the winter of 1846-47, but it was not until 1848 that the Admiralty was fully roused. From that time forward for years expedition after expedition was sent out to search for the missing men, some by the British government, one by Lady Franklin, who spent practically the whole of her fortune for that purpose. Even America participated in the search, for the whole civilized world was keenly interested. The searching parties went by ship from the east and from the west, and overland from the south. Some of these expeditions made important geographical discoveries, and Captain Richard Collinson in the *Enterprise*, sailing from the west, reached in 1851 Gateshead Island, whence he could look across the strait where, it is now believed, one of Franklin's vessels sank, to King William's Land, where lay the skeletons of some of the men he sought. But of these things he was wholly unaware. Another vessel from the west, the *Investigator*, under Captain McClure, reached Barrow Strait, but there ran aground and was ultimately abandoned. The crew, however, traveled over the ice and joined an eastern searching party and thus made the Northwest Passage, though not all of it by ship.

It was not until March, 1854, that Dr. John Rae obtained authentic information as to the fate of the expe-

dition. In 1845-47, under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company, Rae had continued the work of Simpson and had practically completed the exploration of the northern coast of North America. During this time he displayed untiring energy and great skill in traveling and in obtaining a living off the country. In 1848 he took up the search for Franklin and continued it for several years. Finally, at the time given above, he met Eskimos who gave him information to the effect that every man of the expedition had perished. Their stories were reinforced by the fact that they had in their possession many objects which had belonged to the expedition. Upon returning to civilization, Dr. Rae and his companions were given ten thousand pounds, the reward offered by the Admiralty to any one who would set at rest the fate of Franklin and his companions.

For several decades thereafter other explorers, notably Captain McClintock, who was sent out by Lady Franklin, obtained additional information from the natives, found the skeletons of some of the dead and many articles belonging to the expedition, also two short written papers. From all this data the story of what befell the expedition was finally pieced out.

The *Erebus* and *Terror* spent the winter of 1845-46 at Beechey Island. When the ice broke up next summer they sailed away but were beset in Victoria Strait on September 12, 1846, and all efforts to free them were in vain. Finally on April 22, 1848, they were abandoned. Up to that time twenty-four officers and men had died, including Franklin himself, who passed away on June 11, 1847. The food supply was scanty, and the survivors, one hundred and five in all, set out for Back's Fish River, two hundred and fifty miles to southward, hoping doubt-

less to subsist on the fish and game they might find there. But it was a hopeless quest. One by one their strength gave out and they perished of disease, cold, and hunger. A small party of Eskimos saw and camped with some of the white men, but fearing their own safety would be compromised by remaining, they stole away and left the white men to their fate. "They fell down and died as they walked," said an old Eskimo woman who eleven years later told the story to McClintock. The end of the last man of the unfortunate expedition has thus been pictured by one who in after years penetrated to that boreal solitude:

"One sees this man, after the death of his last remaining companions, all alone in that terrible world, gazing round him in mute despair, the sole living thing in that dark, frozen universe. The sky is somber, the earth whitened with a glittering whiteness that chills the heart. His clothing is covered with frozen snow, his face lean and haggard, his beard a cluster of icicles. The setting sun looks back to see the last wretched victim die. He meets her sinister gaze with a steady eye, as though bidding her defiance. For a few minutes they glare at each other, then the curtain is drawn and all is dark."

CHAPTER XIII

LATER TRAVELERS AND EXPLORERS IN THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST

Of the other explorers of the great Northwest perhaps the most notable were Simon Fraser and David Thompson. Fraser entered the service of the Northwest Company at sixteen and at different times he was stationed in almost every section of the fur country from Lake Superior to the Pacific. In 1805 he ascended the Peace and Parsnip Rivers, turned up that tributary of the Parsnip that is now known as Pack River, and on a long narrow lake that he named Lake McLeod he established the first post west of the Rockies and north of the Spanish settlements in California. I saw this post in 1916 and again three years later. It is still far remote from railroads and civilization and consists merely of two log houses. A small band of Siccanni Indians have their huts close by, and two or three trappers and free traders have small establishments not far away.

Fraser also established Fort St. James, Fort George, and other posts in New Caledonia, as British Columbia was then called; he discovered and explored Stuart's River, Stuart's Lake, and many other streams and lakes; but the achievement for which he is mainly remembered was the descent of the great river that now bears his name. Starting from Fort George on May 28, 1907, with four canoes, nineteen voyageurs, and two Indians, Fraser alternately floated downstream and portaged round

frightful canyons until almost to the sea, when shortage of food and the hostility of the Indians caused him to turn back.

Fraser was a restless adventurer and fur trader, without much education or special mental endowments; David Thompson was also an adventurer and fur trader but his main interest was the pursuit of science, and he was a skilled astronomer, geographer, and explorer. He served both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, and for sixty-six years he kept voluminous journals covering his experiences and observations from 1784 to 1850. These journals fill forty volumes of manuscript and are still preserved, but unfortunately they are mostly dull and dry scientific data and contain little of interest except to scientists.

During his long career Thompson traveled over a great part of the Northwest, exploring, surveying, taking astronomical observations to fix the latitude and longitude of places, and mapping the country. All this work was carried on in connection with his labors as a trader, though, to their credit be it said, the Northwest Company seem to have indulged and encouraged his efforts, even at times at some loss to themselves.

Among his many achievements may be mentioned the discovery of Athabasca Pass through the Rockies and the exploration of the headwaters of the Columbia. In 1811 he descended the Columbia to its mouth and meant to take possession of the country but found Americans, employed by John Jacob Astor, already established at Astoria. Despite the many hardships he endured during his long career, Thompson lived to the advanced age of eighty-seven. Though not so well known by the general public as some of his contemporary explorers, he has been

rightly called "the greatest geographer of his day in British America, and the maker of what was then by far its greatest map."

The big features of northwestern geography were discovered by such men as Radisson, La Vérendrye, Hearne, Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson, Franklin, and Simpson. The minor details were filled in by a host of less distinguished men. Meanwhile, great navigators like Vancouver, Cook, and Bering explored the Pacific coast. Russian fur traders occupied Alaska, but even when that country was purchased by the United States in 1867 much of the vast interior was unexplored. The great gold rush of the late '90's, however, led adventurous men to push into almost every nook and cranny both of Alaska and of British Yukon in search of the glittering "root of all evil," just as forty years before the discovery of gold in British Columbia led to the exploration of much of that great province.

As late as 1890, however, there were still vast areas in the Dominion of Canada—between one-third and one-fourth of the whole—that had never been penetrated by white men. That this was so was due mainly to the great size of the country, natural obstacles, and the climate.

Of the Barren Grounds, for example, hardly more was known than in the days of Franklin and Simpson. In the last thirty years, however, several notable expeditions have been made into that region. Of these expeditions one of the most remarkable was made by a young Englishman named Warburton Pike, who penetrated far into the Barren Grounds in search of musk-ox, an animal concerning which little was then known. In June, 1889, he left the Canadian Pacific Railroad at Calgary and trav-

From a photograph by Horetzky

Dog train at old Fort Garry, now Winnipeg

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eled three hundred miles north past Edmonton, then only a fur post, to Athabasca Landing, and thence went by water to Fort Resolution at the western end of Great Slave Lake. There he obtained the assistance of an old half-breed named King Beaulieu and of his numerous family. The whole party, "men, women, and children, amounting in all to over twenty souls, or to be more practical, mouths," set out in three birchbark canoes for the east end of the lake. In addition, there were fifteen half-starved dogs.

The supply of food was scanty, and, though some fish and ducks were caught or shot along the way, the commissariat was completely empty when Pike, some of the half-breed men, and two of the women left the northeast shore of the lake and struck off northward into the interior. With them they took two canoes, intending to follow a chain of detached lakes which led toward a much larger lake known as Lake Mackay. They hoped speedily to fall in with the caribou, which were then migrating southward, but the herds had not yet got that far, and for several days they got nothing but a few whitefish and a wolverine, an animal that is eaten only in starving times, as they are scavengers and even grave-robbers. September 13 found them encamped in a clump of spruce on the shore of the Lac du Rocher. They had still found no signs of the caribou, and had been able to catch no fish at all in this lake.

"There is," says Pike, "no better camp than a well-set-up lodge with a good fire crackling in the middle, and in this respect we were comfortable enough, but the shortness of food was telling rapidly. We had made no pretence at eating all day, and since leaving Fond du Lac [on Great Slave Lake] had subsisted almost entirely

on tea and tobacco, while even on the Great Slave Lake provisions had been none too plentiful. We passed the evening smoking, and, as I have found usual in these cases, talking of all the good things we had ever eaten, while eyes shone in the firelight with the brilliancy peculiar to the early stages of starvation. Outside the lodge the wind was moderated; the northern lights, though it was still early in the year, were flashing brightly across the sky, and far away in the distance we could hear the ominous howling of wolves. Late in the night I awoke, and, on lighting my pipe, was greeted with the remark: 'Ah! Monsieur, une fois j'ai gôuté le pain avec le beurre; le bon Dieu a fait ces deux choses-là exprès pour manger ensemble.'" ("Ah, Sir, once I tasted bread and butter; God made those things expressly to be eaten together.") The remark was made by old King Beaulieu and expressed his idea of luxurious eating.

In the morning they were lucky enough to catch enough trout to relieve their hunger, while two hunters, who had been sent ahead, returned late in the evening with a small load of caribou meat. Next day they portaged across a neck of land to Lake Camsell and in the afternoon saw and killed a big bull caribou. Says Pike:

"There was no more thought of traveling that night, and, while two men were skinning and cutting up the caribou, the others unloaded and carried ashore the canoe, lit a fire, and got ready the kettles for a feast that was to make up for all the hard times just gone through. There was plenty of meat for everybody to gorge themselves, and we certainly made a night of it, boiling and roasting till we had very nearly finished the whole animal. I could not quite keep up with the others at this trial of eating powers, but after a couple of weeks among

the caribou I was fully able to hold my own. We seemed at length to have found a land of plenty, as ptarmigan were very numerous, just losing the last of their pretty brown plumage and putting on their white dresses to match the snow, which would soon drive them for food and shelter into the thick pine woods round the shores of the Great Slave Lake."

For several days they pushed northward, killing large numbers of caribou and cacheing the meat under rocks or by breaking the ice near the shore of small lakes and throwing the carcasses into shoal water; this last made the safest cache of all, for the ice would at once freeze again and would defy all the efforts of the wolves or wolverines.

On the 27th of September they finally found and Pike killed a big bull musk-ox. They were then on the headwaters of the Coppermine and not far from the site of Fort Enterprise and the scene of the awful disasters that befell Franklin's first expedition. The weather was growing colder, and they were not provided with proper clothing, snowshoes, or dog-sledges. Yet says Pike:

"Nobody liked to be the first to talk about turning back, but on reaching the top of a low range of hills and seeing a flat desolate stretch of country lying to the north of us, with the lakes frozen up and no signs of animals or firewood, King turned to me and said: 'It is not far from here that the white men died from cold and starvation at this time of the year; let us go back before the snow gets deep and we are not able to travel.' The old man looked particularly tough at this moment; none of our faces were very clean, but his was the more remarkable, as the blood of the last caribou that we killed had splashed in it, and, running down his beard, had mixed

with his frozen breath and appeared in the form of long red icicles hanging from his chin. I think he knew what was in my mind and had an idea that I was laughing at him, for suddenly his quick temper got the better of him and he broke into one of those wild volleys of blasphemy that I had heard him give way to so often, and, turning on his heel, said that I could do as I liked, but he was going to make the best of his way back to the lodge."

The party returned, without special adventure to Lake Camsell, and there Pike, King Beaulieu, and some of the women and children remained for several weeks, the men killing some game but, for the most part, taking things rather easily, feasting on fat caribou and lounging in the lodges. In the middle of October a fierce blizzard swept down from the north and covered the earth under two feet of snow, while every day the daylight grew shorter and the sun shone with less warmth.

"With the increasing depth of snow," says Pike, "there was a noticeable migration of life from the Barren Ground. Ptarmigan came literally in thousands, while the tracks of wolves, wolverines, and Arctic foxes made a continuous network in the snow. Scattered bands of caribou were almost always in sight of the top of the ridge behind the camp, and increased in numbers till the morning of October 20th, when little Baptiste, who had gone for firewood, woke us up before daylight with the cry of *La joule! La joule!* and even in the lodge we could hear the curious clatter made by a band of traveling caribou. *La joule* had really come, and during its passage of six days I was able to realize what an extraordinary number of these animals still roam in the Barren Ground. From the ridge we had a splendid view of the migration; all the south shore of Mackay Lake was alive

with moving beasts, while the ice seemed to be dotted all over with black islands, and still away to the north shore, with the aid of the glasses, we could see them coming like regiments on the march. In every direction we could hear the grunting noise that the caribou always make when traveling; the snow was broken into broad roads, and I found it useless to try to estimate the number that passed within a few miles of our encampment. We were just on the western edge of this passage, and afterwards heard that a band of Dog-Ribs, hunting some forty miles to the west, were at this very time in the very last straits of starvation, only saving their lives by a hasty retreat into the woods, where they were lucky enough to kill sufficient meat to stave off disaster. . . . The caribou, as is usually the case when they are in large numbers, were very tame, and on several occasions I found myself right in the middle of a band with a splendid chance to pick out any that seemed in good condition. The rutting season was just over, and as the bulls had lost all their fat and their meat was too strong to eat, only does were killed. A good deal of experience is necessary to tell the fat ones, but the half-breeds can tell age and sex pretty well by the growth of the horns; often King told me which to shoot at, and it was seldom that he made a mistake in his choice."

Pike says that he cannot believe that the buffalo herds on the prairies ever surpassed in numbers *La foule* of the caribou, and this statement is borne out by other travelers in the Barren Ground. Ernest Thompson Seton, who made a trip thither in 1907, estimated the total number of caribou in the region at thirty millions, but his figures are probably too large. Even now these great herds are rarely disturbed by white hunters.

On November 11th Pike, two of the younger Beaulieus, and five Yellow Knife Indians set out once more with six sleighs, drawn by twenty-four dogs, for the Barren Ground to hunt musk-oxen. The meat caches that had been established along the way helped the party greatly. A few days' travel brought them to the edge of the last timber, "the Land of Little Sticks," and from there they were forced to haul a supply of wood for use further on. Nine days of travel found them far out in the Barren Ground, with their wood almost exhausted and their food all gone. The dogs were so ravenous that they had to be watched continually to prevent them from eating their harness and the leather lodge. Luckily the hunters discovered two big herds of musk-oxen, so the party struck camp and made for the nearest herd.

"After traveling about three miles through some rough hills," says Pike, "we caught an indistinct view of the musk-ox, fully a hundred in number, standing on a hillside from which most of the snow had drifted away; and then followed a wonderful scene such as I believe no white man has ever looked on before. I noticed the Indians throwing off their mitten-strings, and on inquiring the reason I was told that the musk-ox would often charge at a bright color, particularly red; this story must, I think, have originated from the Whites in connection with the old red-rag theory, and been applied by the Indians to the musk-ox. I refused to part with my strings, as they are useful in keeping the mittens from falling in the snow when the hand is taken out to shoot, but I was given a wide berth while the hunt was going on. Everybody started at a run, but the dogs, which had been let out of harness, were ahead of us, and the first thing that I made out clearly through the driving snow was a dense

black mass galloping right at us; the band had proved too big for the dogs to hold and most of the musk-ox had broken away. I do not think they knew anything about men or had the least intention of charging us, but they passed within ten yards, and so frightened my companions that I was the only man to fire at them, rolling over a couple. The dogs, however, were still holding a small lot at bay, and these we slaughtered without any more trouble than killing cattle in a yard. There is an idea prevalent in the North that on these occasions the old musk-ox form into a regular square, with the young in the center for better protection against the dogs, which they imagine to be wolves; but on the two occasions when I saw a band held in this manner, the animals were standing in a confused mass, shifting their position to make a short run at a too impetuous dog, and with the young ones as often as not in the front of the line. There was some rather reckless shooting going on, and I was glad to leave the scene of slaughter with Marlo in pursuit of stragglers. Marlo, in common with the other Indians, had a great horror of musk-ox at close quarters, and I was much amused at seeing him stand off at seventy yards and miss an animal which a broken back had rendered incapable of rising. He said afterwards that the musk-ox were not like other animals; they were very cunning, could understand what a man was saying and play many tricks to deceive him; it was not safe to go too near, and he would never allow me to walk up within a few yards to put in a finishing shot. After killing off the cripples, we started back to the place where we had left the sleighs, and, night having added its darkness to the drifting snow, we had the greatest difficulty in finding camp. Marlo confessed he was lost, and we were thinking what

it was best to do for the night when we heard the ring of an ax with which somebody was splitting wood in the lodge. . . . We had eaten nothing for a long time, so we celebrated our success with a big feast of meat, while the dogs helped themselves from the twenty carcasses that were lying about. They gave us very little trouble in the lodge, as we saw nothing of them till we skinned the musk-ox next day, when two or three round white heaps of snow would uncurl themselves on the lee-side of a half-eaten body."

Late the next afternoon, while the others were setting up the lodge, Pike "climbed to the top of a high butte to have a look at the surrounding country; the hill was so steep that I had to take off my snowshoes to struggle to the summit, and was rewarded for my trouble by a good view of probably the most complete desolation that exists upon the face of the earth. There is nothing striking or grand in the scenery, no big mountains or waterfalls, but a monotonous snow-covered waste, without tree or shrub, rarely trodden by the foot of the wandering Indian. A deathly stillness hangs over all, and the oppressive loneliness weighs over the spectator till he is glad to shout aloud to break the awful spell of solitude. Such is the land of the musk-ox in snowtime; here this strange animal finds abundance of its favorite lichens, and defies the cold that has driven every other living thing to the woods for shelter."

Later the party attacked two other bands of musk-ox and killed so many that the sleds were loaded down with heads and robes. The hunters then turned homeward, and after many hardships Pike reached Great Slave Lake. He spent the remainder of the winter at Fort Resolution, making an occasional hunt after caribou or wood buffalo.

In the spring, with Mackinlay, the head of that post, a white man named Murdo Mackay, and a party of half-breeds and Indians, he set out northward once more, and succeeded in descending the Great Fish River as far as Beechey Lake, where they found traces of Eskimos. On this trip Pike saw many interesting sights and experienced many adventures, but there is space to tell of only one more musk-ox hunt. One day along the Great Fish River an Indian spied a large band of these animals, and as the women were badly in need of hides with which to make moccasins, a hunt was arranged in a fashion that Pike had not seen before.

"Most of the guns crossed the river, and a spot was selected for the slaughter just where the stream broadened out into a small lake; at right angles to the river mounds of stone and moss were put up at a few yards' distance from each other, ornamented with coats, belts, and gun-covers, and behind the outside mound Capot Blanc took up his position. A steep hill ran parallel with the stream about two hundred yards away, and along this guns were posted at intervals, with the intention of heading the musk-ox toward the water. Noel and Marlo, supposed to be the two best runners, were to make a long round and start the band in our direction; I was stationed with three other guns among some broken rocks on the south side of the river, just opposite the barrier; and orders were given that no shot should be fired till the musk-ox took to the water.

"It was a most interesting scene, and I would not willingly have changed places with any of the loyal Canadians who were at this time celebrating the anniversary of Dominion Day, with much rye whiskey, a thousand miles to the southward. I had plenty of time to admire the

surrounding landscape, and the sunset that lit up the snow-drifts on each side of the river; when suddenly over the opposite ridge appeared the horns of a band of caribou, and for a moment the leader was outlined against the sky as he paused to look at the strange preparations going on in the valley below. Behind me a ptarmigan, perched on a rock, crowed defiance; but there was no other sound, except the rush of water and the occasional grinding of an ice-pan dislodged from some small lake in the course of the stream. Fully an hour we sat among the rocks, and were beginning to think that the hunt had miscarried, when we heard a distant shouting far down the valley, and the next moment caught sight of a scurrying black mass crossing a spur of the hill close to the river's bank. The men posted along the ridge took up the cry as the musk-ox passed them, and joined in the chase; soon the animals came to the barrier, and pulled up short at the apparition, while, to increase the alarm, the hoary head of Capot Blanc arose from behind a mound of rocks right in front of them. This was the critical moment, and they would certainly have taken to the water and been at the mercy of their pursuers but for an untimely shot that caused them to break, and I was not sorry to see that several of the band escaped. I had had a splendid view till now, as the musk-ox halted within twenty yards of me, but we were forced to lie low when the shooting began, as the bullets were rattling freely among the rocks in which we were hiding. We did no shooting on our side of the river, except to finish off a couple that took to the water; seven were killed in all, six cows and a calf about a month old; there were no bulls in the band, and from what I afterwards saw they seemed to keep separate from the cows

during the summer. A solitary old bull is often met with at this time of the year.

"When the hunt was over, I inquired the meaning of the shouting that had been kept up so continuously throughout the drive, and was informed that this was necessary to let the musk-ox know which way to run. At starting they had shouted: 'Oh, musk-ox, there is a barrier planted for you down there, where the river joins the little lake; when you reach it take to the water, there are men with guns on both sides, and so we shall kill you all'; when the men are out of breath, they shout to the musk-ox to stop, and, after they have rested, to go on again. These animals are said to understand every word of the Yellow Knife language, though it seems strange that they do not make use of the information they receive to avoid danger instead of obeying orders. The partial failure of the hunt was attributed to the fact that Moise had called across the river to me in French, and the musk-ox had not been able to understand this strange language."

After his return to Fort Resolution Pike ascended Peace River to the Great Canyon, and thence late in November set out in a canoe with two white men, an Indian, and a half-breed to go up the Peace through the Rocky Mountains and follow its southern headwater, Parsnip River, to Fort McLeod, intending to go from there to Vancouver. But the river froze before they reached Finlay Forks, and while attempting to ascend the Parsnip on foot they lost their way and went up Nation River. After weeks of suffering from cold and starvation in this wilderness of mountains—a region which I have myself twice passed through—they finally made their way back, in an almost dying condition, to

a trading post at the Canyon. From there, later in the winter, Pike traveled overland to Edmonton and Calgary.

Pike related his experiences in a book entitled *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada.* It is a classic of adventure and exploration in the Canadian wilderness, and is to me the most fascinating book of all the many that have been published on this subject. A few years after his return from the Barren Ground Pike made a trip up the Stikine River, crossed over to the headwaters of the Liard, and thence to those of the Yukon, and descended that mighty river almost to its mouth. His adventures on this long journey are set forth in *Through the Sub-Arctic Forest.*

In 1893 J. S. Tyrrell and J. W. Tyrrell, in the interest of the Canadian government, traveled from Lake Athabasca to Hudson Bay and came near starving to death on the stormy western coast of Hudson Bay. Their experiences are related in a book called *Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada.* Two years later Caspar Whitney made an adventurous winter journey in search of musk-ox, and in graphic language he describes his experiences in *On Snow-shoes to the Barren Grounds.* In 1907 Ernest Thompson Seton, the well-known naturalist and artist, and Edward Preble, a scientist connected with the United States Biological Survey, penetrated into the region north of Great Slave Lake, and Seton has written in a most interesting way of the caribou migrations and other features of the region in his *The Arctic Prairies.* Several other hunters and explorers have traveled in the Barren Grounds, but in many respects the most remarkable trips thither are those described by David Hanbury in his *Sport and Travel in the Northland of Canada.*

Hanbury repeatedly crossed the Barren Grounds be-

tween Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay, following during part of the way the course of the Arkilinik River, which he considered much the easiest route. In February, 1902, with two white men and some Eskimos, he left Hudson Bay, ascended Chesterfield Inlet on the ice, crossed over to Great Fish River and followed that stream to its mouth, taking with him two light canoes drawn on dog-sledges, traveled westward along the Arctic coast, first with sledges and then in the canoes, to the mouth of the Coppermine, ascended that river to above the Bloody Falls, and then followed to its headwaters a small western tributary known as Kendall River. There the Eskimos turned back, while the three white men crossed the divide to Great Bear Lake and ultimately reached Fort Norman.

The most remarkable feature of this long journey is that in making it Hanbury, already an experienced and rsourceful Northland traveler, did not attempt to carry much provision with him but lived off the country. Having won the confidence of the Eskimos, he was able to make use of their unrivaled knowledge of how to obtain subsistence. Though more than once entirely out of food, the party was never actually starving, and the white men reached civilization in good condition. In fact, Hanbury's skill as a traveler compares very favorably with that of Simpson and Rae. His book is full of suggestions as to methods, and Vilhjálmur Stefansson says that he obtained more aid from it than from all other books combined. Stefansson himself attained a proficiency in this kind of travel that has perhaps never been equaled, but his remarkable work, both as an explorer and an ethnologist, is too fresh in the public mind to need description here.

In the vast territory west of the Mackenzie the main

geographical features—the mountain chains, the great rivers and lakes—were slowly ascertained by fur traders and other explorers. In later years notable work in this, as in other regions, was done by the Canadian Geological Survey, particularly under Dr. George M. Dawson, a distinguished scientist, who himself conducted several expeditions. In the last thirty years enthusiastic mountain climbers—some of them from England and the United States—have done much to explore the mighty maze of mountains in southern British Columbia, and the Canadian Alpine Club makes an expedition to the region every year.

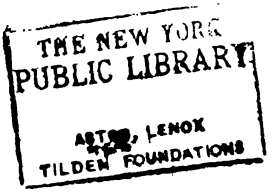
As early as 1840 Robert Campbell of the Hudson's Bay Company ascended the Liard River to its headwaters and crossed over to the Pelly, one of the tributaries of the Yukon. Eight years later he established a fur post called Fort Selkirk at the junction of the Lewes and Pelly. This post was so remote that seven years would elapse between the time trade goods left London for Fort Selkirk and the time that the furs obtained in exchange arrived.

Notwithstanding the many journeys of fur traders and other explorers, there still exist in the vast Canadian Northland several large primeval areas that have never been pressed by the feet of white men.

Having been born with a fondness for penetrating into the unknown "beyond the farthest camping ground and the last tin can," the author in 1916 made an attempt to explore one of these areas, namely, that lying between the headwaters of the Peace and Liard rivers. This area, according to a writer in the *American Geographic Magazine,* had a total extent of about twenty-eight thousand square miles. That so large a region at so late a

Photograph by the Author

Mountains near the headwaters of the Saskatchewan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date had never been explored seems incredible. But it should not be forgotten that British Columbia, in which the region lies, is larger than some empires. Twenty Switzerlands could be set down in it, and there would still be room for England, Scotland, and two or three other countries. Almost the whole of it is one mighty mass of rugged mountains, and, except where there are railroads or navigable rivers, the difficulties attending travel are tremendous. Dangerous rapids and mighty canyons bar the way on most of the streams, and even along those that can be navigated with comparative ease the traveler begins to meet with obstacles the moment he attempts to penetrate the country beyond the banks. Furthermore, the summer season is short, and expeditions almost always travel hurriedly in order to avoid being caught in the far interior by the freeze-up. In consequence, even along such a stream as Peace River, the main course of which has been known for over a century, there exist within a few miles of the stream areas never penetrated by white men; this is true even of that stretch of the river where it bursts through the Rockies. As for railroads, there were none in either northern or central British Columbia until the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific, completed in 1913. In northern Alberta a railroad running from Edmonton reached the lower Peace early in 1916. By using the first of these roads going in and the second coming out I was able to shorten my trip by about eight hundred miles—to travel by rail through regions that hitherto could only be traversed with pack-train or canoe in summer and dog-sledge in winter. But even with this saving the canoe trip to and from the unexplored region was almost a thousand miles long.

With a resourceful French Canadian named Joe

Lavoie I left the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway at the little station of Hansard on the upper Fraser. Our outfit consisted of rifles, light tents, provisions, blankets, and a light canvas-covered canoe. Descending the Fraser thirty-five miles to Giscome Portage, we crossed the eight-mile divide to Summit Lake, and thence by Crooked River, Lake McLeod, Pack River, and the Parsnip we floated down to the point where the Parsnip is joined by the Finlay from the north, thereby forming the mighty Peace, which at once proceeds to break its way through the black mountain wall of the Rockies toward the Mackenzie and the Arctic sea.

Thirteen days of poling, tracking, and portaging up Finley River brought us to the mouth of the Quadacha or White Water, a considerable tributary flowing in from the northeast. As early as 1824 John Finlay, in the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company, had ascended the main river to its source, and in more recent years explorers, prospectors, and trappers had also gone as far as the Long Canyon or farther, but no white man had been any distance up the Quadacha, and it was around the headwaters of this stream that the unexplored region lay that we wished to penetrate. A glance at its water was enough to convince me that mighty glaciers lay about its head, for the flood it poured into the clear waters of the Finlay was almost as white as milk. Lavoie was of opinion that the color was due to "white cut-banks," but past experience enabled me to know that it was caused by big glaciers ("rock mills" one might call them) grinding up silt.

The Quadacha looked so swift and turbid that we left the canoe and most of our outfit cached on an island not far from the mouth and struck out overland with

pack-sacks. The country we traversed was a terrible tangle of mountains, the lower slopes of which were cumbered with down timber. We had hoped to eke out our provisions by killing game or catching fish, as we had usually been able to do hitherto, but in this we failed. After five days of weary work we finally reached a point where the Quadacha forked; there, as our food supply was running short, we decided to turn back. Luckily next day we climbed a high peak from which we had a magnificent view over the unexplored country. Far to the northeastward we beheld a magnificent mountain, much taller than any other in that region, and an immense ice field, certainly one of the largest in the whole Rocky Mountain system. Both of these I later named after Lloyd George, the great British statesman.

After returning to our canoe we ascended the Finlay to beyond Fox River and penetrated the region north of what is known as the Long Canyon. Again we had no success hunting and presently found ourselves seven days' journey from our canoe and cache with only a scanty two days' supply of "grub." It looked as if we might go hungry before we could get back to our base, but the following day I was lucky enough to kill a fine fat black bear and the next day two Stone's mountain sheep, or black sheep, so that we had an abundance of good meat. And I might add here that "mountain mutton" is the best game meat I have ever tasted.

On my return home—we came out by way of the lower Peace and Peace River Landing—the story of the trip appeared in two numbers of *Scribner's Magazine* and in more extended form in a book entitled *On the Headwaters of Peace River*.

The trip had been a long and exhausting one, but the

memory of that magnificent mountain and glittering ice-field filled my thoughts by day and my dreams by night until the call proved too strong to be resisted. One day in early August of 1919 found me again alighting from a Grand Trunk Pacific train at Hansard prepared to set out once more on the quest by the same route.

My companion was Alban P. Chesterfield, a young Detroit surgeon, who had had considerable experience in the wilds of Ontario but who was making his first trip amid high mountains. At Summit Lake we had the good fortune to secure the services of George Holben, a husky young trapper, prospector, and Indian trader whom I had met at McLeod Lake on the previous trip. From Summit Lake as far as Finlay Forks we also had the company of a character well-known in the Hudson's Hope region, namely, "Dad" Brennan, formerly a cook in the cow country of Montana but hailing originally from the Ozark hills. As Brennan had lost one eye and could not see any too well out of the other, he was glad to have one of us ride in his canoe and read the water for him; an arrangement that was also helpful to us, for our eighteen-foot canvas-covered canoe was heavily laden with food and other *impedimenta*.

We had started with an outboard motor, which we expected would prove very helpful on the long river trip, but it did not run properly at the beginning, and we soon had the misfortune to wet the magneto, after which the thing was altogether useless, so we left it at Summit Lake. This was doubly unfortunate, for not only was the trip rendered much more laborious but we moved more slowly and lost valuable time.

We floated rather leisurely down Crooked River, a delectable little stream where we caught many rainbow and

Dolly Varden trout and added an occasional grouse or duck to the larder. It was vitally necessary thus to supplement our commissariat, for the distance to be traveled was so great that it was impossible to take with us sufficient food for the trip. In fact, it may be said that we fished and shot our way to Mt. Lloyd George.

Late one afternoon on the Parsnip while riding in the bow of the foremost canoe I happened to spy on a low-cut bank far ahead a black object that presently resolved itself into a bear. Luckily the wind was favorable, and bruin was busily engrossed in the work of raking open ant hills and licking up the inmates as they crawled over the ruins of their homes. George steered the canoe close inshore, and we drifted quietly down upon the unsuspecting plantigrade. When we were within seventy yards, the bear suddenly looked up. There was a thicket of willows close by, and knowing that in a moment he would bolt out of sight, I let drive with my sporting Springfield. The bullet landed, but the bear half fell, half sprang into the thicket. In a few moments Doodle, George's little twelve-pound fox terrier, and I were ashore, but the soft-point bullet had done its work well, and another shot was not required.

Doodle, who was only a pup, was wildly excited. It was his first opportunity to chew up and shake a bear, and he joyously made the most of it! Holben and I dragged the animal down on the beach, and just then the second canoe arrived. Kinky, Brennan's little fox terrier bitch, at once sprang ashore and came rushing up to see what Doodle was barking about. But when she saw the bear and got his wind, her stump of a tail went down and she hastily took refuge at the farther end of her master's canoe. However, we managed to convince her that there

was no danger, and ultimately she joined Doodle in the exciting work of shaking the bear. For half an hour those little dogs kept biting and gnawing away, while their shrill ki-ki-ing resounded over the river and up through the spruce-covered hills. Finally, with tongues lolling out, they lay down beside the kill, with satisfaction written over their eager little faces.

When we reached Finlay River we found it in flood, which meant that what would have been a hard task at best would be more than ever difficult. But we cut down our load, and for fourteen days, through a changing panorama of high mountains, we bucked the current with paddles, poles, and tracking-line. As Holben and the doctor were both better canoe-men than I, most of the tracking fell to me. When not pulling on the rope, I often trudged along the shore, and, with a little "game-getter," which had both a rifle- and a shot-barrel, managed to kill many of the willow-grouse and fool-hens which Doodle and I flushed.

On the fifth day up the Finlay the doctor had a splendid shot at a brown bear, but missed it completely. Overeagerness, failure to take into account the way the animal was standing, and the fact that the hunter was shooting at a bear for the first time probably accounted for the miss, but Holben, who was inclined to be facetious, declared it was because the doctor did not take into account "the size of the bank around the mark." The miss was all the funnier because the doctor not half an hour before had been expatiating upon what he could do to a bear at three hundred yards. He did not hear the last of the episode until he duplicated the performance on the return trip. After that the subject became too tragic to be referred to lightly.

At Fort Grahame, the little Hudson Bay post sixty miles up the Finlay, I renewed my acquaintance with Fox, the half-breed trader in charge, and also with a number of Indians I had met three years before. My introduction to these Indians on the previous occasion had not been an auspicious one, for I had shot a brown bear within hearing of the post, and when we pulled up to the landing, the sight of the hide and hindquarters brought a scowl to the face of every aborigine who was squatting on the bank watching us. However, we told the Indians where they could find the rest of the meat and this and a few gifts helped to establish friendly relations.

These Indians are of the Siccanni tribe. There are now about sixty of them, and they hunt and trap over a region as large as Indiana. They buy guns, ammunition, some summer clothing, tea, sugar, tobacco, and a few other articles from the post, but their main dependence for a livelihood is upon the game they kill. Moose is their staff of life, with rabbit standing second. They also slay bears, sheep, goats, caribou, and whistlers; these last are a sort of marmot, whose fat flesh is highly esteemed and out of whose skins the Indians make warm robes. Most of the rabbits are caught by the squaws in snares, and it sometimes happens that a camp has nothing whatever to eat except rabbit meat. This state of affairs is considered the next worst thing to starving, as rabbit is not very toothsome as a steady diet and seems to have little sustaining power. However, rabbits are better than nothing, and when they are scarce, which happens every seven years, when most of them die of a mysterious disease, both lynxes and Siwash are likely to be frequently on short commons.

Among the Indians at Grahame was an old squaw whose picture I had taken surreptitiously at Fox River on the previous trip. I had sent the picture to her through the trader and had also sent him a copy of *Scribner's*, in which the picture was reproduced. Fox had shown the magazine to her son and had said: "Your mother's picture will now be seen by the people of all the world." This had seemed very fine to the aboriginal mind, and I now found everybody ready to pose with the utmost willingness.

These Indians are so remote from civilization that they had escaped an epidemic of measles which the winter before had wiped out half the tribe at McLeod's Lake, and the influenza, which had killed most of the bucks among the Beaver Indians in the Hudson's Hope country on the plains side of the Rockies.

A few days later, a little below the mouth of a creek called Paul's Branch, we met two moose-hide boats loaded down with Chief Pierre's family. Aleck and Dan, whom I had met three years before, recognized me when afar off and greeted me as an old friend. Both are intelligent, energetic fellows and splendid moose-hunters, about the highest type of Indian I have met. We had a friendly powwow of an hour or so on the beach, and there was much picture taking.

When I was in the country before, all these Indians lived in tents, the year round, but Aleck told us proudly that he had built a cabin at the mouth of the Ackié. His brother Dan was anxious to be the first of his people to visit the outside world and see steamboats, railroads, and automobiles, of which he had heard wonderful tales. But there was one thing that troubled him.

"When I get in white man's country," said he, "must

I carry my grub and when I get hungry stop, build fire, and cook a feed? "

At noon of the fourteenth day from the Forks and the twenty-fourth from the railroad we at last came in sight of the milky water of the Quadacha, and here, in a sense, the trip really began. Three years before the river had looked so forbidding that Lavoie and I had cached our stuff a few hundred yards upstream and had struck off into the unexplored region with pack-sacks. But I was determined this time to work the canoe up the river as far as possible and to get our base of supplies as near our goal as was practicable. I knew that some stretches of the stream were navigable, but there were other stretches I had not seen in which there might be all sorts of obstacles. So far as I am aware no white man had ever even attempted to ascend the stream, but Aleck had told us that the Indians sometimes came down it on rafts.

Navigation proved bad enough but better than I had feared. At the point where the stream issues from the mountains it flows between high rocky walls, but in this canyon the current, though very swift, was not impossible. By dint of paddling, poling, and almost constant tracking we managed after a little less than three days' work to reach the forks, which had marked the limit of my progress overland in 1916. On the way we had skirted the base of the mountain called by me in my book " Observation Peak," but renamed by the Canadian Geographical Board " Mount Haworth." It is one of the ugliest, most God-forsaken peaks in all Canada!

As in 1916, the east fork was the whiter stream, and up it we turned our canoe, for I then supposed that at its headwaters we would find Mt. Lloyd George and the big ice-field. The stream soon proved very bad indeed.

Repeatedly we had to carry around great log-jams or cut our way through them, but still we made steady progress. However, late in the afternoon of September 8, our fifth day on the Quadacha, the mountains pinched in on the river, the current grew swifter, and we heard ahead the roar of rapids.

As we had ascended the Quadacha game signs had become more and more abundant, due to the fact that we were getting out of the range of the Indians. The bars were covered with moose, caribou, and bear tracks, and beneath a great limestone cliff at the forks we had seen goat tracks. On one bar I had seen where a big wolf had pulled down and eaten a calf moose that had wandered too far from its mother's protecting care. And now, just as it was coming time to camp, I discovered a great muddy hole in the river bank that had been dug out by moose which came there to drink a sort of mineral water that trickled out. This water smelled and tasted much like that at the famous French Lick Springs of Indiana. Whatever its mineral properties were the moose were evidently very fond of it. Their trails, in places worn two feet deep, converged toward it from both sides of the river like highways toward a city.

We had been making heavy inroads of late into our provisions, and it was highly desirable that we obtain meat. We camped a few hundred yards above the lick, and I sent the doctor to keep watch with instructions to shoot anything eatable that might appear. I then set out to climb the mountain-side behind camp in order to get a look ahead, while Holben walked up the river to examine the rapids.

After climbing several hundred feet I made the unpleasant discovery that the river, which above the forks

had been following an almost east and west course, turned southeastward a few miles ahead, instead of northeastward, as I had expected. While I was still cogitating upon this unexpected discovery there resounded from down in the valley four thunderous reports from the doctor's high-power .35 caliber Newton. As it was already growing dusk, nothing could be gained by climbing higher, so I descended to camp and there Holben presently appeared with the discouraging word that he believed that we had reached the head of navigation. Soon the doctor came in through the darkness with news that he had shot a young moose, so we were assured of an ample supply of fresh meat.

Holben's report on the river ahead was so unfavorable that we decided to take to the hills. Next morning we made a cache in the woods some distance below the moose lick. We pitched the larger tent and put some of our belongings in it, but all of the food we put on a platform fastened between two spruce trees. The canoe we drew up into the woods to a place where no tree would be likely to fall on it.

About three o'clock in the afternoon we struck off into the mountains with pack-sacks. We took with us a double blanket apiece, a meager cooking outfit, a strip of canvas, a four and a half pound balloon-silk forester tent, and provisions for about eight days. Each man had a rifle, and George carried a "half-axe."

As those who have tried it know, back-packing through the mountains is the hardest work a man ever tried. Holben and I were both out of practice, while it was Chesterfield's first experience. But we made eleven hundred feet by aneroid before camping, and thirteen hundred more the next morning, and by noon had topped the

first range, which had an altitude of fifty-one hundred feet. So far good, but when we had moved northeastward along a grassy alpine valley for a couple of miles we came to a deep cleft which reached down almost to the level of the river, and it was clear that we had climbed too soon. Here we flushed a covey of big blue grouse, which alighted in balsam trees, and Chesterfield shot three with a little .22 pistol.

Leaving my pack near where we found the grouse, I climbed a thousand feet to the top of a summit on the left and from thence obtained at last a view of our long sought goal. Before me, above the next range, towered the three snow-capped peaks of Mt. Lloyd George, while for miles to right and left of them stretched away the great white ice-field of my dreams. It was truly a sublime spectacle, well worth the weeks of bitter effort the view had cost me, and yet disappointment mingled with my exaltation. The mountain was farther away than I had hoped, and the range between ran parallel with, not toward, the Lloyd George range. Clearly much hard work lay before us. Holben's enthusiasm for the search was already visibly evaporating, the doctor's determination was stronger than his ability as a packer, and I realized that even yet we might have to turn back without reaching the goal.

I noticed that the valley ahead rose rapidly to westward, and in the hope that it would reach such an elevation that we would not have to descend far we followed along its rim until near sunset. We made camp in a little grassy glade, with dwarfed balsam trees handy for beds and firewood. Owing to the presence of slide rock, water was scarce, but I managed to find a tiny rill and obtained a scanty supply. The rill was surrounded on

all sides by a dense willow thicket, and while I was waiting for the water to collect in a hole I had dug in the gravel I heard a noise in the thicket. Thinking it was one of my companions, I called out; as there was no answer, I realized that it was an animal of some sort. But the willows were so thick I could not see ten feet through them. In fact, I never even caught a glimpse of the animal, but subsequently I found, about sixty feet away, the fresh tracks of a big grizzly bear. He had stolen quietly out on the other side.

Three hours of travel next morning found us still on the first range, while far above and behind us towered the black, craggy peaks of the culminating summit. Four hundred feet beneath us lay the barrier valley which had, as we had hoped, risen to timber-line. Beyond this pass rose another peak, its middle slopes covered with grass and dwarf balsam, its summit a rugged mass of crumbling slate. It was ideal country in which to hunt, and even as we sat feasting our eyes on the prospect, Chesterfield noticed a bull caribou walking along the mountain slope opposite. The animal caught sight of us almost at the same time, and when the doctor moved to obtain a better position from which to shoot, the bull turned and ran up the mountain-side. But after going twenty or thirty yards his fatal curiosity got the better of him and he turned broadside on for another look. Both of us let drive but without result. The bull ran a few yards and again stopped. Quickly raising the Lyman sight on my breech-bolt from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty yards, I took steady aim, resting my elbows on my knees, and fired again. The Springfield bullet told with a resounding smack, and the bull went down. Soon he was up again, but it was clear that

he was disabled, and we all thought from his behavior that he was hit in the lungs.

Descending into the valley, we left our packs there and climbed up to the game. We found the bull lying in some dwarf balsam. He stood up as we approached, and then we saw that he was shot through the windpipe. He was of the Osborn species, still young and with rather small antlers, from which a few strips of "velvet" were still hanging. He looked ugly and displayed a disposition to charge, but by keeping above him we managed to take a number of pictures at close range. Doodle was too venturesome. He rushed in on the bull and began snapping at his heels, whereupon the caribou charged him with surprising agility, and, striking a lightning blow with his big front feet, landed on the terrier's back. Luckily it was a glancing blow, else it would have been the end of Doodle. The terrier gave an agonized yelp and took refuge in some bushes. Thereafter he was more wary in his demonstrations.

"We don't want to skin the bull here," said Holben presently. "We'll just drive him down into the valley."

By much shouting and throwing of sticks and stones we finally did get the bull down into the grassy pass, and there the doctor administered the *coup de grâce* with his .22 pistol. The antlers seemed hardly worth the labor of carrying out, but we took the skin, and I used it most of the rest of the trip for a bed, a purpose it served admirably. We also took as much meat as we could carry. Holben cut off the ribs on one side and roasted them before the fire. That night we ate unbelievable quantities of caribou meat, which stands next after mountain mutton in my estimation.

By noon next day, after a hard and dangerous climb

over rotten slate ledges, we topped the next range and beheld a magnificent panorama. Four thousand feet beneath us lay the valley of the North Fork, or Warneford River, while beyond towered range after range of rugged peaks. Most conspicuous, of course, were Mt. Lloyd George and the great ice-field. We could see the upper part of three glacier snouts descending from the field, but their lower portions were cut off from view. Far to the northwest along the same range was another large glacier, distant perhaps twenty miles from us. Below it lay an emerald-green lake, probably seven or eight miles long and studded with a dozen rocky islands. Somewhat farther down the valley were a number of large ponds, while southeast of Lloyd George lay another lake, only slightly smaller than the first and surrounded on three sides by tall mountains.

The scene held for me one big surprise. Ever since the 1916 trip I had believed that the Lloyd George glaciers drained into the East Fork of the Quadacha, and that it was they that made "the Quadacha white." But now I saw that those before us formed the main sources of the West Fork, or as I had named it, Warneford River, and that the white water of the East Fork must come from some other source.

Steep cliffs made any descent into the valley at that place impossible, so we moved along the top of the range. Not until late in the afternoon did we reach a place where a descent seemed practicable, and by that time we were back to a point near but far above the East Fork of the Quadacha. For more than three days we had been traveling in a vast semicircle, and our camp was not more than eight miles in a direct line from our canoe and cache. It was clear that if we had ascended the

river a few miles more—and we later found that this could have been done—and had then climbed the range we were now on we would have saved an immense amount of effort. But it is often so when traveling in an unexplored country.

It was evident that the task of reaching Lloyd George would still be long and difficult. We were badly worn-out, so we spent the next day pottering about the camp and along the range. The next morning Holben set out for the cache to bring up more food. The doctor and I spent the two days while Holben was away hunting along the range to eastward. We found many old caribou tracks and droppings, and it was clear that a month earlier the animals had been there in considerable numbers, but they had gone elsewhere, and we saw no game bigger than ptarmigan.

We were able, however, to study the problem ahead at leisure and to obtain some fine views of Lloyd George. Two of the peaks appeared to be almost perfect cones, while the third and nearest was a rough block. When all other mountains in the region were in plain sight, the peaks of Lloyd George were often veiled in clouds. I realized that the mountain was taller than I had supposed and that the task of climbing it would be a serious one. Its height could hardly be less than ten thousand feet, which would make it considerably taller than any other peak in the Rockies north of the Robson region. However, the snow-field was the biggest spectacle, even though it seemed certain that the larger part of it was out of sight on the northern slope of the range.

We were also able to obtain fairly good views of the upper Quadacha and of a fine range of snow-capped mountains in which part of it seemed to head. There are

four of these peaks, and I have little doubt that the largest is the " Great Snow Mountain," seen by Frederick K. Vreeland from the Laurier Pass country to southward in 1912. It seemed to us that one branch of the East Fork swung in behind the Lloyd George range, and I think it probable that this stream drains still greater glaciers on the north slope.

Late in the afternoon of the second day Holben reached camp with a small load of food and with some disquieting news. He said that our last fire in the valley had caught in the peat-like soil and had burned a great hole eight or ten feet across and three or four feet deep. He had arrived just in time to save the tent and its contents, and he said that in a few hours more the fire would probably have begun running through the forest and would inevitably have destroyed both our canoe and cache. He had spent hours putting out the fire and on leaving supposed that he had done so, but on the way up to join us he had grown fearful that some sparks might still be smoldering and that these might start the conflagration afresh. It was greatly to our discredit as woodsmen that we had not thrown water on the fire when we left it, but only a few embers had remained and the soil was so damp that, though both Holben and I had thought of doing so, we had each decided it to be needless.

After a consultation it was decided that Holben should return to camp and make sure, while the doctor and I should go on to Lloyd George alone. I was loth to lose Holben's aid as a packer, and I knew that his help in case a mishap should befall either of us would be invaluable, but the possibility of being left five hundred and forty miles by river from railhead without either

canoe or food was entirely too serious to be contemplated lightly.

Next morning, taking our rifles, the little axe, the forester tent, a single blanket apiece, and what food we could carry, the doctor and I plunged down into the valley on our way to Lloyd George. The goal we had set for that day was a small glacier on the opposite range. By a little before sunset we reached the glacier and crossed it. We had seen many caribou tracks on the way, and the snow on the ice was trampled down and crimsoned with blood from the animals' soft horns, but of the animals themselves we caught no glimpse. However, as I was selecting the site for the tent in a little glade among some balsam trees a big cock blue grouse walked out of the grass and stood staring at us until I decapitated him with a bullet from the Springfield. Surely he was a most obliging bird! His weight was certainly not less than five pounds, and he formed the main ingredient in a toothsome mulligan that lasted for three meals.

I went to sleep that night believing that next day would be the crucial one of the whole trip. A high barrier ridge still lay between us and our goal, and though we had studied it long and eagerly through our glasses from the range behind us we felt by no means sure that we would be able to pass it.

Reaching a big mountain is, in fact, not unlike securing an interview with a great man: one must pass all sorts of obstacles before finally attaining the inner sanctum.

Next morning we climbed the barrier ridge, only to find that on the other side it broke down in steep precipices. We attempted to follow the ridge but speedily became involved in a tangle of impassable cliffs. Turning

down into the glacial valley again, we made our way slowly over slide rock to the mountain that rose at the head of the valley, and attempted to climb round its left shoulder.

This mountain is absolutely the most barren peak it has ever been my lot to see. From this summit, on every side, down to timber-line its steep slopes are covered with slide rock, ranging from stones the size of one's fist up to huge boulders as big as a house. For hours we picked a perilous way round this peak, rarely sure of our footing and often becoming involved in frightful difficulties. But happily the slip that would have proved fatal never occured, and about two o'clock in the afternoon we finally reached a long ridge which presently brought us in sight of what we were seeking.

Once more Lloyd George and the great ice-field loomed up before us, and we had a clear view of the three glaciers, rippling down for two thousand feet or more into the valley. In the valley itself an unexpected spectacle met our eyes: a gorgeous alpine lake six or seven miles long, a mile or more wide, and surrounded on three sides by high mountains. As usual the peaks of Lloyd George were partly veiled in clouds.

We made a miserable camp that night on a rocky shelf just at timber-line, and had a hard time keeping our fire going because of shifting wind and gusts of snow and rain. By noon next day we reached the shores of the lake but rather the worse for wear. I myself was very weary, and the doctor was so exhausted that on the way down he had had a sort of mental lapse. He left his rifle lying on the mountain-side where we stopped to rest, and we had gone several hundred yards before I noticed it was missing.

"Where is your gun?" I asked him.

He held up his camera by its strap and answered in a sort of dazed way: "Isn't this it?" But presently he came to himself, and together we went back and recovered the weapon.

After lunch he had a fit of vomiting, but his spirit was still strong, though the flesh was weak, and he insisted on accompanying me up the lake shore toward the glaciers. Leaving our pack-sacks under some spruce trees, we set out.

Rarely have men walked amid grander surroundings, and, despite his illness, Chesterfield's spirits rose, while I forgot my stiffened muscles and felt only the exaltation of success. Furthermore, Nature relented and furnished us a smooth level beach on which we walked almost as upon a pavement, except that now and then we would come to a bushy slideway through which we must pick our way. The beach was covered with game signs, including the tracks of grizzlies, while the saplings in the slides were scarred by bull caribou and moose cleaning their horns of "velvet" and testing their newly grown weapons. In the two days we were about the lake we saw six moose, all cows or calves. It was truly a virgin spot, one that seemingly had never been profaned even by the Indians.

Three hours' walking brought us within a few hundred yards of the glaciers, but here our way was barred by a limestone precipice that reached down to the water's edge. The afternoon was already nearly spent, so reluctantly we turned back toward our packs. Thus far the peaks of Lloyd George had been veiled with clouds, but for a few minutes they were revealed and from some distance down the lake I obtained pictures which showed

"I had the good fortune to kill an immense bull moose"

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them in dim outline. The closer-up pictures of the glaciers unfortunately proved unsuccessful. Two of the glaciers, I may say here, descend to the water level; the third ends at a cliff hundreds of feet up, and the water comes tumbling down in a fine feathery cascade. The smallest is hundreds of yards wide.

It had been my hope, when I undertook the trip, to reach the top of the mountain, but I realized now that I must give up the thought. Only a larger party, well-equipped with an alpine outfit, could safely climb those rugged slopes of ice. In our present weakened state and without proper equipment such an attempt would have been little short of madness. For a time I considered building a raft and actually going to the foot of the glaciers, but there was little to be gained by doing so, as we had already been very close up. Furthermore, the effort would have taken a couple of days, the weather was threatening, the season was late, there was danger that we might be snowed in. So in the afternoon of the next day we took the homeward way.

I had noticed from the heights that the outlet of the lake takes a very big drop, and I had resolved to investigate this on the way back. Near the foot of the lake we passed an enormous beaver house, one of the largest I ever saw, though not quite so big as one we saw later near Quadacha Forks. We found the outlet of the lake to be a stream about eighty feet wide with a good volume of water. This little river has a descent of over a thousand feet in less than a mile. Right at the outlet there is a considerable cascade. Around a bend we came upon two more. Just below these the river lets go all holds and drops sheer almost two hundred feet, by aneroid measurement, in one of the prettiest falls one could wish

to see. This final discovery formed the climax of the trip, and, needless to say, we were happy men.

The great mountain, the immense snow-field, the three rippling rivers of ice, the emerald-green lake, the superb falls, form, all in all, a combination scarcely equalled in America. But it will be many years before tourists will visit the place. Personally I am glad of it. I should hate to think of that virgin wilderness being littered with discarded lunch-boxes and the landscape scarred with automobile trails!

Four days of hard travel brought us back once more to the canoe and cache, where I experienced great relief in finding everything safe. The rest of our stay in the Quadacha country was devoted to hunting, and we had numerous interesting experiences. In the twilight one evening I had the good fortune to kill an immense bull moose that was six feet eight inches high at the shoulder and that had a fine, symmetrical spread of antlers. But of this and of a startling adventure that befell us on our way down Peace River I shall not attempt to tell here.

We had failed to climb Mount Lloyd George, but we had reached and photographed it, had mapped Warneford River and much of the East Fork of the Quadacha, had discovered two new lakes and definitely located a third that hitherto was known only by Indian report, and had found one of the finest falls in the world. Doubtless we should have had time and energy to do more had we not had the misfortune with our motor. As it was, we got out of the Finlay country just in time to escape the freeze-up, and it was eight degrees below zero the second night after we reached railhead at Peace River Landing.

There still remains a big summer's work in the Quadacha region. Some party should trace the upper

reaches of the East Fork, should climb Lloyd George, and should ascertain the exact dimensions of the snowfield. Such a party should start at least a month earlier than we were able to do. I have little doubt that on the northern slope of the Lloyd George range they will find glaciers even bigger than those we saw and photographed.

In other parts of the Canadian Northland there still exist other unexplored areas in which persons wishing to get in Back of Beyond can realize their desire. I have given somewhat in detail my own experiences, not primarily because of their importance, but as illustrating what can still be done in the far Northwest.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW AMUNDSEN MADE THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

ONE spring day in 1889 a young Norwegian named Fridtjof Nansen came up Christiania Fjord and received the plaudits of admiring throngs for having accomplished the splendid feat of crossing the great Greenland ice cap on skis. Among the thousands who cheered the erect young ski-runner that bright sunny day was a boy named Roald Amundsen, and as the lad wandered with throbbing pulses amid the bunting and the cheering crowds there was born in his eager brain the thought that some day he, too, would become an explorer. And something seemed to whisper to him: "If *you* could make the Northwest Passage!"

Four years later Nansen sailed northward in the *Fram* on the expedition which resulted in his getting farther north than man had ever done before. Amundsen felt that he *must* go with his hero, but his mother thought him too young and wisely bade him stay at home and go on with his lessons. In a year or so, however, his mother passed away, and in 1894 he made his first voyage to the Polar Sea on board a sealing vessel. In 1897 to 1899 he took part, as mate, in the Belgian Antarctic Expedition under Adrien de Gerlache. While on this voyage his boyhood dream took definite shape, and he determined to combine with the search for the Northwest Passage an object of still greater scientific importance, that of locating the present situation of the Magnetic North Pole.

The tasks he had set himself required extended scientific training, so Amundsen studied terrestrial magnetism and other subjects in the German Marine Observatory and elsewhere. Like all truly great men he realized the importance of fitting himself for the task he proposed to undertake.

Professor Nansen took keen interest in the young enthusiast's plans and aided him to collect the necessary funds. By the spring of 1903 all was in readiness. A sturdy wooden ship named the *Gjöa* had been bought and fitted out with a thirteen-horsepower petroleum motor, and in her Amundsen had already made a trial voyage to the Polar Sea. Provisions and equipment had been carefully selected, and a crew of six had been engaged. All these men were hardy, resourceful fellows, able to turn their hands to almost everything. Even the cook, Adolf H. Lindström, could run the engine, steer the ship, or make zoological collections.

On the night of the 16th of June, 1903, the little ship sailed quietly out of Christiania harbor on a venture that in four centuries had cost the lives of hundreds of brave men and had baffled scores of bold mariners from Verrazano and Cartier to Franklin and Collinson.

The supplies included scientific equipment, food for five years, petroleum for the engine, rifles and cartridges, and six Eskimo dogs which had been brought to Norway by the second *Fram* expedition. On the voyage across the Atlantic two of the dogs were seized by a disease that paralyzed them and they had to be killed. Ten more dogs, sledges, kayaks, and other equipment were obtained

at Godhavn in Greenland. At Dalrymple Rock, north of Cape York, they took on board considerable further stores that had been deposited for them by Scotch whaling vessels. By this time the little *Gjöa* was so heavily laden that the deck was down almost to water-line, and cases were piled nearly as high as the main boom.

Ice conditions in the Arctic were unusually favorable that year, and with comparatively little difficulty the explorers crossed Lancaster Sound and on August 22 anchored in Erebus Bay on the southeast coast of Beechey Island. It was at this place that the last Franklin expedition had spent their first winter, and from it they had vanished from the sight of men. Here stood memorials to Franklin and to certain other explorers who had perished in that region. Here also were the graves of some of Franklin's men, marked by wooden crosses. Here a depot of provisions and supplies had been established in 1852 for the use of one of the expeditions that searched for Franklin, or for Franklin himself if he happened to pass that way.

Some parts of the building still remained, as well as some of the supplies. Amundsen took away the last of the coal and also a small quantity of sole leather. This last, though over half a century old and exposed for many years to wind and weather, they found to be preferable to their new "best American sole leather"—a discouraging evidence of degeneracy in present-day methods and workmanship.

Some of the crew became so interested in this salvage work that they could hardly bear to leave anything behind. The smith found an ancient anvil over which he went into the wildest raptures. Nothing would do but that it must be taken along; "the expedition would

simply go to the bottom" without it. So on board it went, though no real use was ever found for it. Several other members took a great fancy to an old handcart and thought it ought to be taken, but there was no space for it, and when Amundsen facetiously asked if they would take it in their bunks, they reluctantly abandoned the idea.

After making needed magnetic observations the expedition left this gloomy island of darkness and death and steered southwestward. For a time they had little difficulty with ice, but one day in Peel Sound they perceived far ahead in the mirror-like glitter of the calm sea what appeared to be a solid mass of ice extending from shore to shore. Amundsen feared, with a sinking heart, that he was about to reach the barrier that had turned all his predecessors back—"the border of solid unbroken ice." But the season had been unusually favorable, and luck was with them. Between the shore and the ice on either side they found clear and unimpeded channels, through one of which they passed easily and were soon again in open water.

That night they reached a point so near the Magnetic Pole that their compass ceased to act, and they were reduced to steering by the sun and stars like their Viking forefathers. As the sky was veiled a large part of the time in impenetrable fog, such navigation was very dangerous.

Late next day the *Gjöa* reached the De la Roquette Islands, where in 1875 Sir Allen Young in the *Pandora* had encountered an impenetrable barrier of ice. But again the lucky Norwegians found open water and sailed on to Bellot Strait, where for two years Captain McClintock had vainly waited for a chance to get through.

At Bellot Strait the *Gjöa* again found an open channel and passed on into virgin water never before traversed by the keel of a ship.

Thus far the expedition had met no insurmountable barrier, but it must not be inferred that all had been easy. The ordinary hazards of the Arctic sea had required all their resourcefulness, and if all had not been men experienced in navigating ice-filled waters, they would doubtless long before have come to grief.

On September 1st, while they were still congratulating themselves over having entered the hitherto unnavigated portion of the Northwest Passage, they met with the most dangerous experience of the voyage. At six o'clock in the morning they ran aground upon a great submerged reef that branched out in all directions. They threw overboard twenty-five of their heaviest cases, each of which contained about four hundred pounds of pemmican for dogs, and all that day labored to get off the reef, but in vain. That night a gale sprang up from the north. The vessel pitched violently upon the rocks, the wind howled through the rigging, and the spray dashed over the ship. As a last resort, Amundsen decided to set the sails and endeavor to get off the reef with their aid.

"Then," says he, "we commenced a method of sailing not one of us is ever likely to forget should he attain the age of Methusaleh. The mighty press of sail and the high choppy sea, combined, had the effect of lifting the vessel up, and pitching her forward again among the rocks, so that we expected every moment to see her planks scattered on the sea. The false keel was splintered, and floated up. All we could do was to watch the course of events and calmly await the issue. As a matter of fact, I did feel calm as I stood in the rigging

and followed the dance from one rock to another. I stood there with the bitterest self-reproach. If I had set a watch in the crow's nest, this would never have happened, because he would have observed the reef a long way off and reported it. Was my carelessness to wreck my whole undertaking, which had begun so auspiciously? Should we, who had got so much further than any one before us—we who had so fortunately cleared parts of the passage universally regarded as the most difficult—should we now be compelled to stop and turn back crestfallen? Turn back! that might yet be the question. If the vessel broke up, what then? I had to hold fast with all my strength whenever the vessel, after being lifted, pitched down on to the rocks, or I should have been flung into the sea. Supposing she were broken up. There was a very good prospect of it. The water on the reef got shallower, and I noted how the sea broke on the outer edge. It looked as if the raging north wind meant to carry us just to that bitter end. The sails were as taut as drumheads, the rigging trembled, and I expected it to go overboard every minute. We were steadily nearing the shallowest part of the reef, and sharper and sharper grew the lash of the spray over the vessel.

"I thought it almost impossible the ship could hold together if she could get on the outer edge of the reef, which, in fact, was almost lying dry. There was still time to let down a boat and load it with the most indispensable necessaries. I stood up there, in the most terrible agony, struggling for a decision. On me rested every responsibility, and the moment came when I had to make my choice—to abandon the *Gjöa*, take to the boats, and let her be smashed up, or to dare the worst, and perchance go to meet death with all souls on board."

Amundsen slid down to the deck, and there Lund, the first mate, a very experienced man, suggested that they throw over the last of the deck cargo. They did so, and again the boat forged ahead over the rocks. Suddenly the vessel seemed to pull herself together for the final leap. "She was lifted up high and flung bodily on to the bare rocks, bump, bump—with terrific force. . . . In my distress I sent up (I honestly confess it) an ardent prayer to the Almighty. Yet another thump, worse than ever, then one more, and we slid off."

Well it was for that little crew, far up there in the icy North, that there was staunch timber and honest craftsmanship in their little ship!

But now a new peril threatened. Lieutenant Hansen at the wheel cried out that there was something wrong with the rudder so that it would not steer. To one side lay a rocky island upon which they would soon drift to destruction, unless the rudder would work. Suddenly the little ship pitched high on a wave, the rudder settled back where it belonged, and Hansen shouted that all was right again.

Later that day they anchored near some small islands. A frightful storm sprang up, and there was danger that the anchor chains would part and let the vessel drift to destruction. The engine was kept working full steam ahead to relieve the strain on the anchors. "Fortunately the chains held," says Amundsen, "but there we lay for five days and nights in terror, while the gale boxed the compass."

When the storm finally ceased, the explorers sailed on, but it was clear to them that the autumn storms had begun in earnest and that further progress must be bought at the expense of the greatest danger. Furthermore,

Amundsen wished to stop somewhere in this region in order to ascertain the location of the Magnetic North Pole. One day on the southeast coast of King William Land they saw a little harbor that would be almost ideal for winter quarters, so after sounding the entrance and reconnoitering the country the explorers sailed their vessel in. The basin was so small that the wind could not raise troublesome waves in it, while the entrance was so shallow and narrow that drifting ice—the terror of all Arctic explorers—could not enter and crush the ship. They called the place Gjöhavn.

As speedily as possible the explorers built a storehouse and a magnetic observation house and made other preparations to pass the winter. Two of the men slept in the observation house, and the rest on board the ship. Caribou were numerous, and when they began their migration southward, more than a hundred were killed for winter use. One day a number of Eskimos appeared, and thereafter some of them were almost constantly about the place. Some, in fact, came hundreds of miles to see the wonderful *Kablunas*, i.e., white men. The explorers made use of them as hunters and fishermen and to make clothing of skins.

The explorers remained in this place for eighteen months, and every day of that time careful magnetic observations were taken. Exploring trips were made toward the Magnetic Pole and to Victoria Land.

The time passed pleasantly, for there was plenty of food, and the explorers were like a happy family. There was no strict discipline; every man knew his duties and performed them without orders, and was always ready to give his comrades a helping hand. This was possible because Amundsen was a natural-born leader and also

because he had been careful to take with him only good and tried men.

The monotony of their life was broken by hunting and fishing trips, by visits to the Eskimo villages, and by good-natured tricks on each other. Lindström, the cook, was often the subject of these jokes, and he always was ready to laugh louder than any one when he saw how he had been sold. One day, for example, Lund and Hansen took a frozen ptarmigan, killed a couple of months before, and placed it in lifelike pose on a snow-drift about twenty-five yards from the ship. Then Lund descended to the fore-cabin, where the cook was eating his breakfast, and called out: "Lindström! Lindström! there's a ptarmigan yonder on the ice." The cook, an eager sportsman, snatched up his shotgun and hurried to the deck. "Where is it?" he demanded. "There, on the bow." The cook crept closer, and then taking careful aim fired. The ptarmigan rolled over in the snow. "Ha! Ha! I hit him that time," cried the elated cook and ran to fetch the game. He picked up the bird and felt of it. "Why, it is quite cold!" he exclaimed in astonishment. A shout burst out from the deck, and, looking up, the cook perceived the jeering faces of the jokers.

Even Amundsen himself was not allowed to escape a certain amount of chaffing. Once, for instance, the captain undertook to learn how to manage an Eskimo kayak, or skin boat. These little craft are very cranky and easily upset. "I chose," says the explorer, "a suitable little pond for practising on. At first I managed splendidly, but my comrades, who were building a cairn close by, made remarks that were anything but flattering. I calmly turned round to tell them that I evidently had a natural talent for rowing a kayak. At that instant both

the kayak and I turned over. The water was so shallow that I touched the bottom with my arms, but the kayak filled and I was wet to the skin. The others had to drag me ashore and my return to the tent to change my clothes was not a march of triumph."

Another time a member of the expedition quietly passed the word among the Eskimos that the captain was anxious to buy seal bladders. These are used by the natives for holding reindeer fat. At once the women began bringing the blown up bladders to the ship for him. At first Amundsen bought the bladders, giving a few needles in exchange, but the supply continued to grow until the whole cabin was covered with bladders. Then he refused to buy any more. Meanwhile, the other explorers had a good deal of quiet fun at their leader's expense.

Most of the Eskimos who came to the ship had never before seen a white man. Many of them still used bows and arrows in hunting caribou. To them a few needles and a knife or so were great wealth. They lived altogether upon the fish and game they could catch or kill, their clothing was of skins, and in summer they lived in skin tents and in winter in snow igloos, in the building of which they were very expert.

They assumed a friendly demeanor toward the white strangers, but in view of the smallness of his party Amundsen thought it well to take precautions against any change of mind. With the idea of impressing them with the white man's power, the explorers secretly placed a powerful charge of guncotton under an empty snow hut and laid wires to it from the ship. Amundsen then assembled the Eskimos and spoke to them about the wonderful things the white man could do and warned them not to expose themselves to his terrible anger. For

example, if they should play any tricks even out there by the snow huts, then the white men would simply sit quietly on board and then . . . "With a terrific report the igloo blew up, and clouds of snow burst high in the air. This was all that was required."

Throughout their long stay at Gjöhavn the explorers had no serious trouble with the Eskimos. With some they became really good friends. Amundsen had a real interest in the natives and did all he could to help them. He found them superior in most ways to Eskimos who had come in closer contact with white men, and he says: "My sincerest wish for our friends the Nechilli Eskimos is that civilization may *never* reach them."

These Eskimos had special customs which they observed, but they had no laws or magistrates. Each man did what seemed best in his own eyes, and stood in little fear of punishment for misdeeds. One tragic occurrence took place under the eyes of a member of the expedition. Among the Eskimos was a man named Umiktuallu, who lived for a time the first summer in a tent pitched close to the magnetic observation house. He owned an old muzzle-loading rifle, which he had traded from another Eskimo. One day he left the weapon loaded, and the children began playing with it. While the rifle was in the hands of a foster-son it went off and killed Umiktuallu's own eldest son, a boy of seven. The father, hearing the sound of the shot, rushed home, saw the dead boy, and in a frenzy stabbed the foster-son to death. Later he was filled with remorse for the deed, but the other Eskimos made no effort to punish him.

By the summer of 1905 the explorers had completed their scientific work and were ready to proceed. They had mapped the coasts round about and had fixed the

position of the Magnetic Pole. They found it to be on the west coast of the peninsula of Boothia Felix, about where it was first located by James Ross half a century before.

Before leaving Gjöhavn they paid off the Eskimos who had aided them. In addition to knives and other articles, Amundsen made eleven heaps of wood and iron and gave them to the aborigines. One day he collected together all the Eskimo women "to enrich them with our empty tins. There were some hundreds of empty tins, and I had put them together in a large heap in the middle of the hill. Then I had the womenfolk arranged round the heap in a ring and told them that when I counted three, they might 'go for' the heap and get all they could. The men arranged themselves behind their ladies: One! two! three! and in they rushed, using both hands as shovels; they threw the tins out backwards between their legs—they were not hampered by skirts—and the men grabbed hold of the flying tins, and so each collected his lot. Laughter and noise, shrieks and shouts, tins flying, men rushing and so the heap was cleared."

Early August 13, 1905, the anchor was raised, and the *Gjöa* once more began her perilous journey. Fortunately conditions were favorable. The preceding winter had been a mild one, and the sea was comparatively free from ice. In one place the passage between the ice and an island was so narrow as to be barely wide enough for the ship to pass through, but through she got and safely. Four days of careful navigation brought them to the west side of Cape Colborne, and they had now sailed "through the hitherto unsolved link in the Northwest Passage."

Ten days later, off Baring Land, a vessel was sighted to westward. It was a memorable moment, for now

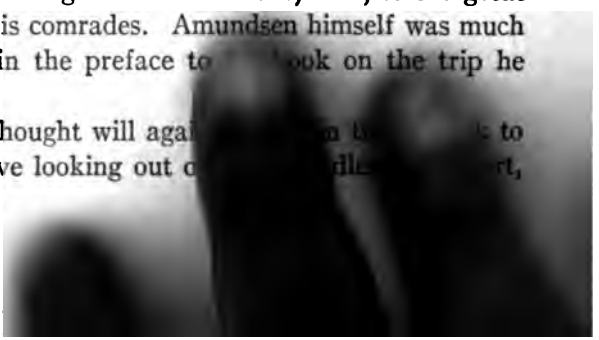
they could truly claim that the Northwest Passage, Amundsen's dream since boyhood had been accomplished. Says he:

"This very moment it was fulfilled. I had a peculiar sensation in my throat; I was somewhat overworked and tired, and I suppose it was weakness on my part, but I could find tears coming to my eyes. 'Vessel in sight!' The words were magical. My home and those dear to me at once appeared to me as if stretching out their hands—'Vessel in sight!' I dressed myself in no time. When ready, I stopped a moment before Nansen's portrait on the wall. It seemed as if the picture had come to life, as if he winked at me, nodding, 'Just what I thought, my boy!' I nodded back, smiling and happy, and went on deck."

The vessel proved to be an American whaler, and from her the explorers obtained potatoes and onions—great delicacies—and newspapers that were several months old but that were read avidly by Amundsen and his comrades.

At this time the explorers expected to be able to get out of the Arctic that season but at King Point, west of the mouth of the Mackenzie River, they were held up by ice and were forced to spend the winter there. Amundsen and a whaling captain from Herschel Island farther west made an overland trip to Eagle City on the Yukon. In March Gustav J. Wiik, the second engineer and assistant in magnetic observations, died, to the great sorrow of all his comrades. Amundsen himself was much affected, and in the preface to [illegible]ook on the trip he says:

"A loving thought will aga[illegible] to the lonely grave looking out o[illegible]rt,



and grateful memories will arise of him who laid down his young life on the field of action."

At Herschel Island, which the *Gjöa* reached in July, another tragedy occurred. Among the Eskimo who frequented the region about Gjöahavn there was a lad of about seventeen named Manni. He was a foster-son of Umiktuallu, the Eskimo who had murdered another foster-son. Manni was eager to accompany the Kablunas to their own land, and, partly out of pity for him, they had agreed to take him. He was given a bath, his hair was well combed and was treated with plenty of insect-powder, and an outfit of clothes was provided for him. He soon became a great favorite with the explorers, being willing to work or hunt, while his happy laughter "banished the most surly airs." He even learned to read and write a little, but his dream of seeing the land of the White Man was never realized. One day in the harbor at Herschel Island he went out duck hunting. He stood up in his little boat the better to aim at a bevy of ducks and in some way fell out of it. Like all Eskimos he could not swim a stroke. He sank and was never seen again.

On the last day of August the *Gjöa* arrived safely at Nome, on Bering Sea, and the crew were accorded an enthusiastic reception by the people. From thence the homeward trip was easy.

Thus, after more than three centuries, the dream of a Northwest Passage was finally realized. By accomplishing it Amundsen won rank among the foremost of great explorers. But the intrepid Norwegian was not content with these laurels. In 1910 he sailed southward to the Antarctic in Nansen's old ship, the *Fram*. On December 15, 1911, he and four companions planted the Nor-

wegian flag at the South Pole. He is now (1920) in the Arctic seas, seeking to reach the North Pole.

Among modern explorers Amundsen takes equal rank with our own immortal Peary. He is a man of great humanity, strong yet gentle. In the recent Great War he returned to Germany all the decorations bestowed upon him by that country. He did not wish, he said, to be honored by a country guilty of such barbarities.

All honor to the noble Norwegian!

CHAPTER XV

THE COMING OF THE SETTLERS

For about three decades the old Hudson's Bay Company competed with the younger Northwest Company for the trade of the great Fur Land. In some places at certain times the rivalry was of a friendly character, and instances are not wanting where opposing traders helped each other, especially in times of danger. But each Company wished to secure a monopoly of the trade, and it was inevitable that many clashes of one kind or another should take place far out in the wilderness, where neither the laws of man nor God were much respected. Intrigues with the Indians, sporadic instances of armed conflicts and even murder, seizure of goods and destruction of rival posts finally developed into open warfare—to bloodshed in the wilderness and to legal conflicts in Canada and England.

Differing on most other things, both Companies were agreed on this: neither wished to see the Fur Land settled, for settlers meant the disappearance of fur-bearing animals. The Companies even preferred that servants leaving their employment should return to their old homes in Canada or Great Britain rather than remain in the Northwest. Nevertheless, a considerable number of such persons did remain in the country, while the half-breed population grew apace, for it was the common custom of the country for the white men to mate, temporarily or permanently, with squaws.

There was not, in fact, a single white woman in the whole of the Northwest until about 1803. She was an Orkney lass who followed her lover thither clad in men's clothes. For two or three years she managed to keep her secret from all except perhaps a few, but in December, 1807, being ill, she revealed her true sex to Alexander Henry at his Pembina River post. The same day she was, in Henry's language, "safely delivered of a fine boy," the first all-white child, according to some accounts, ever born in the Northwest. The first white woman openly to come to the Northwest was the bride of J. Baptiste Lajimoniere, a voyageur in the employ of the Hudson's Bay post at Pembina. She created a great sensation among the Indians and even among the white men, many of whom had not seen a woman of their own race for years and years. According to some authorities a daughter was born to this French Canadian couple on January 6, 1807. If so, this child, which was called Reine, was the first white child born in the Northwest.

The first systematic effort to colonize the Canadian Northwest was undertaken by a young Scottish nobleman, Thomas Douglas of Selkirk. Well educated and possessed of most things considered desirable in life, including a beautiful young wife, who was a daughter of one of the heaviest shareholders in the Hudson's Bay Company, Selkirk joined with many other admirable qualities a philanthropic desire to better the condition of others less fortunate than himself. At that time great poverty existed in the Highlands of his native country, and changes in farming methods had deprived thousands of honest, toiling people of the means of livelihood. Mackenzie's explorations had deeply interested Selkirk. It seemed to the young nobleman that in the vast region

From a photograph by Mathers

Sod hut and buffalo bones

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of the American Northwest there lay rich lands where these poor people might grow prosperous or even rich.

Owing to the competition of the Northwesters, the business of the Hudson's Bay Company had fallen to a low ebb and there had been only two dividends paid in ten years. Selkirk's wife's family already owned a large block of stock, and the young lord quietly bought enough more so that the two families combined controlled the Company.

In 1811 Lord Selkirk obtained from the Company a grant of land in the Red River region larger than the present Manitoba. Over this region he was to possess proprietary and governmental powers that made him practically a feudal lord. Over a hundred people, largely Highlanders, Orkneymen, and Irishmen, were sent out the first year by way of Hudson Bay; other shiploads sailed later. The colonists suffered great hardships on shipboard, on the long journey from the Bay to Red River, and even after their arrival in the colony.

As fur traders the Northwesters naturally looked upon the colony with wintry eyes, for its success would strike at the very existence of their trade. Furthermore, Selkirk's agents attempted to drive the Northwesters out of the region, claiming exclusive rights. In 1815 the Northwesters forcibly broke up the colony and dispersed the colonists. But more colonists and Hudson Bay people came and under the leadership of Colin Robertson and Governor Semple got the upper hand. The Northwesters rallied half-breeds and Indians to their aid and in June, 1816, massacred Semple and a number of his followers at Seven Oaks. Selkirk soon after arrived in the region with reinforcements and regained control. For five years thereafter desultory warfare continued be-

tween the two Companies, but the conflict was ruining them both and finally in 1821 the rivals agreed to coalesce under the name of the older Company.

The new Hudson's Bay Company exercised almost absolute sway over a region larger than Europe, extending from Labrador and the Arctic coast to California. Over part of this region the Company held its power by grant from the British government; elsewhere it had simply assumed control and urged in support of its pretensions certain vague clauses in the original charter.

The union was a good thing for the stockholders and also for their Indian wards. The Company entered upon a new era of great prosperity, while it was able to adopt a better policy toward the Indians. Though jealous of its rights of trade, the Company's attitude toward the Indians was a paternal one. Naturally the Company desired the Indians to be healthy and in good condition, else they could not catch fur; it even made some efforts to educate them mentally and morally. While two companies were in the field the rival traders naturally supplied goods that were most pleasing to the Indians, for upon attracting the Indians depended the trader's success. It happened, of course, that in these circumstances many articles found their way to the Indian that were of no use to him or that were even positively harmful. Firewater belonged in the latter class. But when one Company obtained control a different policy was adopted. A certain quantity of beads and other frivolous gewgaws were, of course, allowed, but the main staples of trade were guns, ammunition, knives, and other articles that were of real utility and that would help the Indian in the struggle for a livelihood. The trade in liquor was, however, too strongly intrenched to be abolished at once.

The Indians demanded it, and often would not sell furs or pemmican unless the beloved poison was supplied them. Ultimately, however, the Company forbade the use of the article except in border regions where the competition of outside traders must be met. In time a Dominion law forbade under heavy penalties the sale or gift of intoxicants to an Indian. Had the old traffic been continued there would be few Indians left alive in Canada to-day.

In the Oregon country the Company fought a long and losing battle against the tide of American settlers, and the end came when America's right to Oregon was recognized in the treaty of 1846. The gold rush of the '50's into British Columbia resulted in the Company's surrendering its monopoly of trade and its governmental rights in that region, though it still continued to trade there in competition with others. Elsewhere the Company maintained its feudal sway for almost half a century after the two rival companies consolidated.

That it held control so long was due to the slow settlement of the region. Much of it never could sustain a large population, and in Rupert's Land, including what are now the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, there was not, even as late as 1870, a single settlement, as distinguished from a fur post, except in the Red River country, where a few thousand whites and half-breeds hunted and trapped and occasionally devoted a little effort to cultivating the soil. The Hudson's Bay Company naturally did not want farmers in its domain, nor did any one have any conception of the real agricultural possibilities of the country. Furthermore, the Northwest was so remote that immigrants could not get into it except by tremendous efforts, nor was there any

way of sending their agricultural products out after the people had arrived. Ultimately a small commerce sprang up by river and creaking carts with the frontier town of St. Paul hundreds of miles to the southward, but for a long time the Red River settlers formed a community almost as much apart to themselves as if they had resided on the moon.

The Company's fur monopoly and other grievances ultimately provoked an armed uprising in Red River under the leadership of Louis Riel. This uprising and the confederation movement in Canada proper brought about a situation which resulted in October, 1869, in the Hudson's Bay Company relinquishing all charter and exclusive rights in its domain. In return the Dominion government paid the Company three hundred thousand pounds, allowed it to retain the land where its forts stood, and granted it one-twentieth of the arable land in its territory, and these land concessions ultimately proved to be of immense value. The Company continued to trade as of old but without any exclusive rights.

Even then the land filled slowly. But a few far-sighted and courageous men like Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona) and Alexander Mackenzie (later Lord Mount Royal) perceived the real possibilities of the Northwest and, despite tremendous obstacles, built the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railroad, finished in 1886. It has been said that "Egypt is the gift of the Nile," and it might with almost equal truth be said that the Canadian Northwest is the gift of this railroad, for it made a hitherto remote region easily accessible to the rest of the world.

Years before a governor of the Hudson's Bay Company had testified before a committeee of the British

From a photograph by Mathers

The coming of wheat and the self-binder

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House of Commons that agriculture could not be carried on successfully in Rupert's Land. He believed what he said, and his view was generally accepted even in Canada. But even before the building of the railroad men knew that the prairie country would grow wheat as good as any in the world; that oats, flax, barley, potatoes, and many other crops would thrive there in great profusion.

After the building of the railroad the land filled rapidly. Settlers came from eastern Canada, the British Isles, from all over the world, even from the United States, and these last were the best of all, for they knew what was needed to succeed and they brought in more money than did the others. Year after year more "claims" were taken up, more "sod huts" were built, more of the land was broken for crops. The tide of settlement swept westward from Manitoba over the rolling plains until the foothills of the Rockies and even remote Peace River were reached by the homesteaders. Meanwhile in British Columbia gold, copper, lumber, salmon, and other natural products brought an influx of settlers to that mountainous land.

As in most new countries enthusiasm sometimes ran wild. Farming was attempted in arid places where Nature never intended that crops should be grown without irrigation, cities were laid out and lots sold far beyond the needs of this generation; boom times were followed by hard times; optimism changed to pessimism; ruin came to thousands who believed themselves rich. Underneath all, however, lay a substratum of real accomplishment; and the net result is to-day that the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia are permanently settled, while the future is full of hope.

And the true mettle of these people of "the Last Best

West" was proved by the valor of their sons in the Great War!

After all, however, only the southern fringe of the land is really occupied. In this fringe are railroads, and mines, and farms, and great cities like Vancouver and Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg. But north of the fringe, except for a few thousand settlers on the plains of the lower Peace, lies the yet untenanted Domain of the North, still almost primeval, a region two-thirds as big as the United States. Here are a few thousand trappers and traders of white and mixed blood; here dwell, almost as of old, the descendants of the aborigines who knew Radisson and Hearne and Mackenzie. Here, as of old, the great Company (with some lesser rivals) still holds sway. "Its canoe brigades still bring in furs to the far fur posts. Its mid-winter dog trains still set the bells tinkling over the lonely wastes of Northern snows and it still sells as much fur at its great annual sales as in its palmiest days."

CHAPTER XVI

THE BROTHERHOOD OF TRAPPERS AND PROSPECTORS OF TO-DAY

ONE autumn near the McLeod River in western Alberta I happened upon a slim, forlorn-looking boy, probably about eighteen years old, who had come all the way from western Pennsylvania, where he had done a little "barnyard trapping," in order to have a go at big game and make a fortune out of the marten, fisher, lynx, otter, and beaver he could catch.

He had pitched his little tent in a grove of jack-pines beside the right of way of the unfinished transcontinental railroad and was waiting for his partner, who was riding their only cayuse across country from Edmonton, a hundred and thirty miles eastward. While waiting he had set some traps and had caught—a weasel! He had expected to find himself in a good trapping country at this point and was much discouraged to learn that he still had a long and toilsome journey to make before he would reach a region where a living could be made catching fur. He spoke of grizzlies with bated breath and wanted my opinion as to whether his powerful .35 caliber Winchester, 1895 model, was big enough for these animals.

"Yes, or for an elephant," I assured him, knowing that in that country the grizzly was almost as extinct as the dodo. "The main trouble will be to find the grizzly."

I have often wondered since what became of the little

chap, whether he did manage to make a go of it, and whether he ever got his bear. He may have been gritty enough to stick, or he may have taken an early train back for the Pennsylvania farm, but, at any rate, his case illustrates one source from which the picturesque brotherhood of trappers and prospectors is fed. I class the two together, for in the remote Northwest, where they still flourish, practically every trapper at some time in his career tries his hand at locating the hiding place of the root of all evil, and practically every prospector is repeatedly driven to seeking pelts in order to make a grubstake for another search for a rich bar.

At the other end of the scale, so far as age is concerned, stands an old Dane, who has sought fortune and failed to find it in half the diggings of the far Northwest and has now settled down to do a little trading and trapping at the point where the mighty Peace River begins to burst its way through the black wall of the Rockies. His one great regret is that he did not go to the Klondike with a certain friend in '98.

"We had two hundred dollars apiece," he relates gloomily. "I heard the Mounted Police at Chilkoot Pass were turning back everybody who did not have five hundred, so I changed my mind and said I wouldn't go. He swore that the devil himself couldn't turn him back. He went to the Klondike and came back with a hundred thousand dollars. I went to Parsnip River and came back with the rheumatism."

Some trappers and prospectors are misfits anywhere except on the border; a few are fugitives from justice. One trapper of the last mentioned class committed robbery and murder in lower British Columbia and sought refuge in the upper Finlay country, where for several

years he managed to operate uncaptured, obtaining his supplies by stealth. What became of him ultimately is not known. He may have crossed the border into Alaska, or he may have met death alone in the wintry solitudes.

But most of the brotherhood of trappers and prospectors are attracted by the wild, free life, with its opportunities for living next to Nature and indulging propensities for hunting and fishing. The trapper calls no man master, and I doubt not that this fact alone has much to do with his willingness to bear the hardships inseparable from the life.

Of hardships there are plenty. Consider, for example, the life of a certain trapper I know, namely "Shorty" Webber, a little Dutchman, with a broad body and a broader smile. Shorty's line at the time of which I speak lay far up Finlay River in the neighborhood of Deserter's Canyon. To reach this remote mountain region in the first place he took the route from Prince George by way of Giscome Portage, Crooked River, Pack River, Parsnip River, and Finlay River. The first part of his lonely journey was not especially difficult, for it was downstream work, but then he had to pole his heavy dugout canoe, containing all his outfit, up the swift and turbulent Finlay, and many were the rapids up which he simply had to wade and "walk" his craft.

Arrived at last at his trapping ground, he must build his cabin and chink it carefully with moss or mud to keep out the wind. He must then build, high up on the stumps of trees, a water-tight cache, in which to put his supplies, safe from bears, wolverines, mice, and packrats. He must cut and drag to his door a supply of firewood.

Next he sets out to select his trap line, cutting a narrow trail through the thick bush and blazing trees every few rods. Along the line he builds two other cabins, smaller and cruder than the first. He also selects the best places to set his traps, makes a few deadfalls, and is constantly on the alert for a chance to kill a moose, caribou, or bear in order to assure a stock of meat for himself and for baiting his traps. Even in the remote wilderness this task of killing sufficient meat is by no means the simple matter that it sounds, and it is unsafe for a trapper to rely upon beinig able to add largely to his larder in this way.

Shorty has come into the country in August, and, by the time the frosts have brought down the leaves from birches and balsam poplars and the fur is beginning to be prime, he is ready. He sets and baits his traps and deadfalls. In order to keep the traps from being covered by the snow he sets many on the tops of stumps of trees he has cut down, or else in notches chopped in the standing trunks. As the snow grows deeper, he is often obliged to cut higher notches, and I have seen such notches twenty or thirty feet high.

Early in the fall Shorty's task of making the round of his traps is comparatively easy—little more than tramping four days over the sixty-mile trail, with a small pack on his back. But as time passes the weather grows colder and the snow deeper; the temperature falls far below zero, and the snow gets so deep that he cannot travel except on snowshoes. There come days when the temperature is forty, fifty, even sixty below, when wild winds have filled the trail with soft and fleecy snow and heaped it in great drifts, when every foot of the way must be broken anew. It is such times as this that test

Photograph by the Author

Shorty Webber's cabin and cache on the Finlay River

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the mettle of a trapper. The lazy ones, those who fear cold and love the ease and warmth of the cabin, may remain within for weeks, but our man is built of sterner stuff. To venture out in the very worst of weather would, of course, be little short of suicidal, nor would it be worth while, for "fur" "runs" but little at such a time. But there comes a time when the wind has fallen, when the air is warmer, when marten and fisher and other furred animals venture forth, and he sets out once more to make the round.

The first few traps he finds untouched, and three of them are completely hidden under the snow. He remedies the defect and pushes on. Here is a trap where a hungry red squirrel has tried to take the bait and has been caught by a forepaw. He is dead, frozen as stiff and hard as a stick of wood. The trapper curses the unlucky thief, resets the trap, and puts the squirrel in his pack for use as bait farther on. Ha, yonder is luck, perhaps! The trap in the notch in a big jack-pine on the hillside ahead is not there; the snow looks trampled down. But, pshaw, there is blood scattered over the snow, and of a fine marten nothing remains but some bits of fur and a foot sticking fast in the trap. Some big tracks, with large claw marks, tell the story. A wretched wolverine has happened that way and has made a meal off thirty dollars worth of fur. Worst of all, the tracks lead along the blazed trail toward other traps.

With tense muscles and tongue muttering imprecations, Shorty reshoulders his pack and trudges along the trail after the hated beast. It is as he feared, the next trap has been cunningly sprung and the bait taken. It is so with the next and the next. For several miles it is

the same story, except that a few of the traps to the leeward of the trail have escaped the wolverine's nose. Finally there is another trap in which a marten has been caught, and again only some bits of fur and splashes of blood remain. Here, however, the wolverine, being full of meat, turns aside. Relieved but puffing out curses like a locomotive, Shorty passes on, vowing that some day he will have revenge.

Miles farther on, in a deep gulch among the mountains, he comes once more to a trap where the snow has been disturbed. As he draws nearer, there is a snarl, and an animal with a demoniacal scowl on its tooth-filled face backs away as far as the chain of the trap will permit. The trapper laughs; the scowl scares him not in the least. No use wasting a cartridge here, for of all animals the lynx is one of the most cowardly. A stout club ends the beast's career, and soon his skin is off and in the pack, along with much of the meat; for lynx meat, be it said, is not only good for bait and dog food but is considered toothsome by trappers as well.

Late in the afternoon, weary with breaking trail, the trapper, still far from his next cabin, selects a sheltered spot in thick spruce timber and proceeds to camp. First he clears away the snow on a spot as large as a small room and builds a fire near one end. Facing the fire, his little open-faced tent is next set up, after which he cuts spruce boughs for a bed and arranges his blankets. He has already hung two small pots full of snow over the fire to melt, but, though he is hungry, he has not time to cook supper yet. While there is still light he must cut a pile of logs to keep the fire going through the night, and only when this task is done does he bake a bannock in the frying pan, fry the big blue grouse he

shot on the way, and brew his tea. After a pipe of tobacco, ignoring the beauties of a magnificent aurora—"the dance of the spirits," as the Crees call it—he rolls himself in his blankets and falls asleep. In a couple of hours the fire dies down, and the bitter cold strikes in through his thin covering; half-frozen, he must get up and pile on more logs. Thus passes the long night.

Five days later, tired, hungry, with soot blackened face and one foot touched with frost, he reaches his home cabin and indulges in a grand feed of beans, bannock, and lynx mulligan. It has taken him two days longer than usual to make the round, for the snow has been very trying, especially so for one with such short legs. He has brought with him the skin of the lynx and the unskinned carcasses of two martens. The weather has not been favorable for a big catch, for even fur-bearing animals do not like to stir abroad much during intense cold, and besides the wolverine has created havoc along the line. On some rounds, particularly in November and March, when fur is running, he will do better; on others not so well.

Two or three times in the winter he will be visited by bands of hungry Siwash, who, if he will permit, will beg everything he has and eat him out of cache and cabin. At Christmas he probably makes the long trip to the little log trading post known as Fort Grahame, down the Finlay, and, with three or four other white trappers and the Indian population of the region, spends a week of wild social relaxation. At the end of that time he returns to his solitary cabin, taking a few supplies, probably tobacco and tea, bought at ruinous prices of the great Company.

In the spring when the ice breaks up and the snow

melts, he has a go at trapping bears and beaver, and, when fur is no longer prime, he pulls his traps, stows his most precious belongings in his cache, leaves his cabin door unlocked, and floats down the river to market his catch. For months he has been looking forward to the trip, and when, after three weeks of fighting wild waters, he reaches Prince George on the Fraser, he proceeds to have what he considers " a good time."

In cases where two trappers go into partnership, they lay out a much longer trap line and have a central cabin at which they meet on certain appointed days. Thus they are able to enjoy each other's society and avoid the terrific strain of months of loneliness, while, in case one becomes ill or meets with an accident, he has some one to take care of him.

The plan has one great disadvantage in that two men who enter into this sort of partnership often find it impossible to keep on good terms through the long and gloomy winter season. They will go out in the fall the best of friends, but there comes a time when the liver of one or both is out of order and tempers flare up. A fight not infrequehtly follows, sometimes a manly contest, fist and skill; sometimes with knives, guns, or any weapon that happens to be handy. More than one bloody tragedy has taken place far away in the depths of the forest with no other witnesses than the white and silent mountains.

The hate that two human beings can develop when alone under such circumstances passes belief. In the spring, if both are alive, they go out, rifles in hand, each narrowly watching the other for any signs of murderous intent. Arrived outside, a change of scene and the society of other men sometimes causes the bitterness to

evaporate when the sun grows warm; by fall the two may be such fast friends again that they renew the partnership and return to the bush—perhaps to reënact a similar drama of quarreling and hatred.

Not all such quarrels have so tame an ending. On my last trip to Peace River I heard of two tragedies resulting from controversies between trapping partners. The summer before there had come to Hudson's Hope a Mexican and an American, both desperate men who had taken part in the revolutions that made the names of Madero, Huerta, Villa, and Carranza known throughout the world. The two men located a trap line on the eastern slope of the Rockies in the remote region from which flow tributaries of the Liard and Peace rivers. Those who knew them say that they were constantly quarreling with each other, and in the spring some difference of opinion brought affairs to a crisis. Both drew their revolvers, and continued firing until both were dead or mortally wounded. When the tragedy was discovered by other trappers, the bodies were left lying where they fell until a magistrate from St. Johns could view them. My old friend Jim Beattie, who keeps the portage at Hudson's Hope, furnished horses to take the magistrate to the scene of the murder and acted as guide and packer. The round trip took sixteen or seventeen days.

The same winter another equally tragic occurrence took place much nearer Hudson's Hope. Two trappers named Holtmeier and Christensen had a cabin four miles above the head of the great canyon. One day another trapper happened to stop at the cabin and on looking inside saw the frozen body of Holtmeier lying in a pool of blood on the floor. Examination of the body disclosed over a

dozen bullet wounds; in fact, it was shot almost to pieces. Christensen had disappeared and has never been heard from since.

Various theories have been propounded to account for the murder. Some think that Christensen went insane and murdered his partner, then rambled off into the woods. Others believe that the two probably had a fight in which Christensen, the smaller man, was worsted; that he then crawled up into his bunk, which was raised several feet above the floor, and that from this position he shot Holtmeier down. In support of this theory they point to the fact that some of the shots ranged downward. Whatever the cause of the murder it is clear that Christensen was either insane or mad with anger, for he continued to shoot until the magazine of his gun was empty.

The snow was deep and the temperature far below zero when the murder took place. Investigation seemed to show that Christensen did not go down Peace River, and to reach the habitations of men in any other direction he would have had to travel hundreds of miles through mountain fastnesses. The generally accepted view is that the murderer perished of cold or hunger.

The trapper who works alone avoids all such unpleasantness as this, but he has to pass many months with no other companions than his dogs, and in case he meets with accident, he has no helping hand to aid him.

On the upper Brazeau River in the foothills of the Albertan Rockies I once saw a crude wooden tepee connected with which was a story of this sort. In the winter of 1907-08 a trapper from the States had a cabin near this spot, and in it were stored all of his supplies. One January day he returned from a round of his traps and

Photograph by the Author

"The wooden tepee whose very crudeness spoke eloquently of the direness of his need"

Photograph by the Author

Some of the Brotherhood of Trappers and Prospectors—one of them reshaping a dugout canoe

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found the cabin burned down. By this misfortune he lost all his food except a little flour and all his bedding except one blanket. The temperature was far below zero, and the wooden tepee—whose very crudity spoke eloquently of the direness of his need—was his attempted solution of the problem of survival. But the wind blew cold through the open cleft, and sleep was a nightmare. His flour ran low, and game seemed to have deserted the region. One day he wrote on a marten stretcher the story of the disaster and stated that he intended to set out for Edmonton, distant one hundred and fifty miles in a direct line and much farther as he would have to go. Of what befell him on that lonely winter journey there are no tidings, but in some wild glen in that illimitable waste of hills his bones lie scattered.

A somewhat similar misfortune happened to my old friend Adolf Anderson—seaman, smuggler, seal poacher, gambler, Klondiker, prospector, trapper, and all-round good fellow—whose life story I have told elsewhere. With another Swede named Nels Hansen he was trapping on the headwaters of the Athabasca, and on the return from one of their rounds they found their cabin burned down in much the same fashion. They were five full days from any human habitation, and they had but four pounds of moose meat, though they had some dogs on which they could have fed as a last resort. They also had blankets.

It was nearly dark, so they built a lean-to of spruce boughs, intending to make an early start next morning for the nearest settlement.

"In the night," said Anderson, in telling me the story, "I woke up and heard Hansen whispering to himself, for he was not much more than a kid. 'Aw, don't worry,'

I say to him, 'we'll get out of this all right.' But down deep I was not so sure."

Owing to a blizzard they made little progress. By the third day their moose meat was eaten, and they were terrifically hungry.

"Hansen could talk of nothing but the fine feeds he had had," Anderson relates. "He would tell of the big beefsteaks, the good cabbage and potatoes, and the yellow cheese he had et. At last I say: 'Shut up, or I will crack you over the head and eat you!'

"That afternoon we reached a small lake and cut a hole through the ice to try fishing. It was a hard job, for the ice was over four feet through, but at last we reached the water. I had one hook and a little bit of moose meat I had saved. While we had been cutting the hole the dogs sat round watching. When I dropped the hook in the water, they all stood up and their tails began to wag this way"—waving his hand from side to side—"as if they were saying: 'Here is where we get a feed!' Poor fellows, they were mistaken, for we caught only one fish. After that a big bull trout broke the line, and we had no more hooks.

"The next day we were so hungry and weak we could hardly break trail. That evening we got near a place in the muskeg where the fall before a weak old pack-horse had mired down and could not get out and was shot. I say: 'It will do to feed the dogs.' But when we got there, we found the wolves had et all but the legs, which were frozen in the mud. We built a big fire over the spot and thawed out the mud so we could pull out the legs. I gave some of the meat to the dogs, but I noticed that the roasted meat smelled pretty well, so by and by I take a bite. It tasted damned good!

"Hansen was hungry, but no horse for him. He would starve first, he say. I filled up till my belly stuck out, then I went to sleep. About midnight I hear the fire cracking big. I take a peep out. I see something flash in the light. It look like a horseshoe moving. Nels was behind that horseshoe. Next morning his belly stuck out as much as mine."

Fortified thus, the two managed three days later to reach another trapper's cabin on the McLeod River and got plenty of more conventional food.

Another adventure which Anderson and a trapping partner named Lebhers had on the Thompson River in British Columbia did not turn out so well. They had pulled their traps in the spring and were going down the river in an old dugout when the dugout filled in a swift rapid, and they were thrown out. Anderson was drawn into a log jam and was nearly drowned. Lebhers managed to cling to the dugout, and Anderson thought he would be safe, but when the Swede got ashore he could not find his partner, though he looked for him for two days. Months later a Canadian Northern survey outfit found Lebher's body in a great jam pile many miles down the river. Anderson and a policeman went in search of it and buried it under a tall spruce on the river bank. As they had no priest along, Anderson fired a salute of five shots over the grave.

Once on a trip down Peace River, in that section where the river bursts through the mighty wall of the Rockies, we landed one day to cook lunch on a beach above which there is a flat on which there stands a rude cabin roofed with strips of birchbark. Within the cabin, in the dirt floor, there is a depression. The cabin was built in 1898 by three prospectors as a shelter in which

to spend the winter. Toward spring two died of scurvy, and the third was too weak to dig in the frozen earth outside, so he buried his comrades in the cabin. Later he managed to make his way back to civilization but died in the hospital at Edmonton. He is said to have told in his last hours of an immensely rich bar, yielding a hundred and twenty-five dollars to the pan, and of a great hoard of buried gold, but if any one has ever succeeded in finding the treasure, he has not made the fact known to the world.

The cabin still stands there. More than once persons unacquainted with its history have slept in it. But no one who knows what the earth beneath its roof holds has ever been known to pass the night there, no matter how fiercely the blizzard may roar.

A few trappers and prospectors find their lives so lonely that they mate with the dusky klooches of the country. In the old days such alliances were frequently entered into without formal matrimonial accompaniments, but Canadian law is now very strict in such matters and is made in the interest of the aborigines. The squaws know their rights and often demand formal marriage ceremonies before they will give themselves to their enamored swains. Perhaps for this reason there is comparatively little race intermixture in the upper Peace country. Klooches do not bear a good reputation as wives, either morally or otherwise; they are very extravagant with their husband's money and wasteful with food, nor are they good cooks.

East of the mountains the trapper's great prize is the fox, particularly the black and the silver, which are merely color variations of the ordinary red fox of that country and are liable to be caught almost anywhere. In

the mountains the most sought animal is the marten, and the best range for these fur bearers is in old, thick forest, at high altitudes. Country that has been burned over and then reforested is not likely to contain many marten. In traveling through a new region with a trapper one will now and then have his attention called to a tract as certain to be "good marten country."

Some trap lines are very long, seventy, eighty, ninety, or even a hundred miles, but there are short ones also. At The Gate on Peace River, some miles below Hudson's Hope, there lives a certain Dr. Greene who runs a line on which all the traps are set on bare hillsides in sight of his cabin. When he deems it desirable to make the round of his line, he merely takes a pair of powerful field glasses and through them ascertains whether any of the traps have been sprung. If there is an animal in one of them, he has, of course, to walk thither and take it out; otherwise, he is able to return in a few minutes to the cheerful comfort of his fire. He evidently was born lucky, for one winter he caught a silver fox and sold it for several hundred dollars.

A trapper's financial success depends in large measure on his skill in marketing his catch. Those who are shrewd enough to bring their fur to one of the larger markets, such as Edmonton, are likely, if they keep sober long enough, to obtain fair prices. Those who sell their catch to the Hudson's Bay posts or to free traders in the region where the catch was made most generally must be content with small returns. The Indian trappers, in particular, suffer in this respect, though not so much so as when Hudson's Bay had a monopoly of the fur business. One hears stories of trappers who make twelve or fifteen hundred or even two thousand dollars a year, but most do

well if they realize four, six, or seven hundred from their catch.

The successful prospector may be waylaid and murdered and his precious dust stolen, but, unlike the trapper, he is at least not troubled by fluctuating prices. In peace or war, in bad times or flush times, gold is invariably worth the same sum an ounce, namely $20.67, not a mill more and not a mill less, for gold is the standard of value. The amount of goods that a trapper can buy with an ounce of dust will vary, but not the price of the dust itself.

Trapping, however, is a much more certain profession than prospecting. If the total number of dollars made by hopeful prospectors seeking gold in the Northwest were to be divided by the number of days they spent seeking it, the daily wage would average no more than a few cents. Now and then a lucky man finds a ledge of quartz or a seam of coal that he can sell for a large sum, or a rich bar from which he can pan out big returns, but frequently a whole summer's labor produces little or nothing.

Nevertheless, a prospector never ceases to hope that he will stumble upon a rich prize such as has fallen to other men in the past, and he continues to play the game with all the abandon of a devotee of roulette or a lottery. Such a man may spend his last cent on the gold trail, but, just as soon as he can, by trapping or otherwise, make a new grubstake, he is off again into the mountains after the golden will o' the wisp.

Of the many stories of this sort of persistence I think the most tragic I ever heard was that of an old prospector in Colorado. He conceived the idea that by driving a shaft into the side of a certain mountain he could

Photograph by the Author

Trappers and a dugout canoe

Photograph by the Author

A prospector "panning" for gold

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strike a rich lode from which a celebrated mine was taking millions. For years he toiled at the task. When his money would give out, he would work at something else until he had accumulated a little stake and could once more return to the labor that was to make him rich. But he grew old and feeble; the shaft progressed less rapidly than his bodily infirmities. One day the old man wrapped himself in his blanket with a stick of dynamite and touched off the fuse.

The richest strike ever made on Peace River headwaters was found in a bar on the west bank of Finlay River, a few miles above the mouth. The lucky finder was a giant Cornishman named Pete Toy, and he and others are reputed to have taken out seventy thousand dollars' worth of dust. Long after making his great clean-up Toy remained a celebrated character in the region. He built a cabin farther up the Finlay, and tradition says that he had two klooches to pack his goods for him. Ultimately he was drowned in the Black Canyon of the Omineca, and, of course, there is a story that he left a vast hoard of dust buried in some secret spot.

His bar still exercises a fascination upon those who have felt the lure of gold. Many have taken a whirl at it, and they never fail to wash out a little gold. Shortly before I saw it in 1916 some prospector had happened that way and had squared the stump of a small poplar and set down in pencil that he meant to file a claim there. He must have been a man with a sense of humor, for he called the claim the "Perhaps Placer."

There are many bars in that region that could doubtless be worked with profit with steam dredges, if the cost of transportation from the railway, over two hun-

dred miles away, did not forbid. Years ago the discoverer of the diggings on Germansen Creek acquired the name of "Old Hog'em" because he charged forty-five dollars for a small sack of flour ground at Williams Lake from frozen wheat. The Hudson's Bay Company still pays ten cents a pound to the freighter who brings in its goods, and miners find the costs practically prohibitive.

A dozen miles below Toy's Bar stands Mount Selwyn, an immense mountain containing hundreds of millions of tons of gold quartz that is said to assay from four to eighteen dollars to the ton. Until a railroad is built nothing can be done to develop this immense treasure hoard, for quartz is a matter of mining on a large scale—of heavy and costly machinery and large numbers of workmen. It lacks the romantic interest that attaches to "poor man's gold," that is, "pay dirt" on a river bar.

When gold is in question, a large section of humanity seem to go stark, staring crazy, and in consequence one hears of innumerable foolish ventures and hoaxes. None that I have ever heard surpasses what old man Peterson at Finlay Forks relates of a rush to Parsnip River in '98. He told some of us the full story one night as we sat in his cabin at the Forks.

"I was on my way up Fraser River to Giscome Portage," said he reminiscently as he stuck a fresh stick of balsam poplar into his little stove. "At Soda Creek I caught up with one of the queerest outfits I had ever run into. They were headed by a fine-looking, gray-haired old gentleman called Colonel Parker. Parker had been in the country before and had staked a lot of placer claims along the gravel bars of the lower Parsnip. He had then gone back to the States and had advertised all over the country what a sure thing he had and how badly

he wanted to take some partners into the business and make them rich. Well, he managed to gather in a bunch of twenty-eight from various places, but mostly from Philadelphia, New York City, and Peoria. I remember two from Peoria very well. One had resigned as chief of police because he felt sure he could dig a lot of gold in Cariboo, and his brother had sold a grocery store and come along. Another man owned a big shoe store in Philadelphia, and all of the men had money. Colonel Parker wouldn't have bothered with them if they hadn't.

"They had it all figured out that they couldn't fail to go home millionaires. The Colonel had told them that a cubic foot of gravel would pan out twenty dollars in gold, and there were so many thousand cubic feet in the top layer of each claim. The next layer was richer still—twenty-five dollars to the cubic foot. The third was still richer—and so on. A few had even taken the trouble to calculate down for a mile, but I forget exactly how much gold they were going to have when they got down that far.

"The terms on which they had bought their share of the claims—of course, the Colonel retained a share in each—were half down in cash and the other half deposited in a Philadelphia bank to be subject to the Colonel's order not earlier than a certain day in July. Altogether the claims sold came to a total of seventy-eight thousand dollars.

"Most of the party had never paddled a canoe before, and good canoe-men were scarce. The Colonel had rounded up two Siwash to help, and he persuaded me to go along. He was a very persuasive man was that Colonel. It wasn't a bad trip. There was grub enough for three times as many people, plenty of tobacco, plenty

of Scotch whiskey. When any of us felt bad we took a drink of Scotch. Most of us felt bad pretty often. Then there were some good singers and a cornet player. He played night and day.

"When we got to Giscome Rapids, one of the canoes ran onto a rock and upset. One of the men went down. He just threw up his hands and sank, and we saw him no more.

"That scared most of the bunch terribly. They wanted to turn back, but the Colonel stepped in and changed their minds. He knew just how to say the right word at the right time and could smooth out anything. He found that one of the fellows still had three hundred dollars with him, and he sold him an eighth of a claim that had been overlooked!

"In spite of his tongue-shooting skill, though, he couldn't persuade all of them to stay in the boats after the drowning. Three of them insisted on walking along through the woods. They got lost and were not found for five days.

"When we got to Giscome Portage, it was clear that it would take a long time to get all the stuff over the eight-mile carry. One day the Colonel called his partners together and said to them:

"'Gentlemen, it'll take several days to make this portage, and I'm going to make a quick trip down river after more supplies. I'll catch you up on Crooked River.'

"So he took one of the Siwash and lit out down the Fraser in a light canoe. It was a week before any one happened to think that the next Tuesday was the day when the money in the Philadelphia bank became subject to the Colonel's order. They talked the thing over, and

three of the most suspicious got into a canoe and set out for the nearest telegraph station, but didn't get there in time. None of the party ever saw the Colonel again, and none of them ever made any millions washing out gold on Parsnip River either."

An almost equally weird episode was recently enacted in the Finlay country within my own knowledge. One day there appeared at the Philadelphia office of the Tonopah Mining Company an individual whom we shall call Dr. James Richardson. With him he brought some rich specimens of copper ore and stated that he had found them in a "blow-out" on the headwaters of Finlay River. His story was so explicit and the specimens were so rich that the officers of the Company sent two young mining engineers, whom we shall call Barrett and MacPherson, to go to the "blow-out" with Richardson and make a report.

The three reached Prince George early in the summer and assembled an expedition which, after six weeks of hard labor, reached the Long Canyon of the Finlay, in the neighborhood where Richardson said he had found the copper.

Arrived there, however, he explained that the "blow-out" was several days' journey back from the river. After careful preparations the party set out overland with pack-sacks, but a few miles back in the mountains Richardson fell over a log and said he had sprained his ankle so badly that he would have to turn back to the camp on the river. He gave Barrett and MacPherson a rough map which they followed faithfully, only to discover that the region was totally destitute of mineral of any sort. After some good sport with caribou, sheep, and goats, they returned to the river. Relations between

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strike a rich lode from which a celebrated mine was taking millions. For years he toiled at the task. When his money would give out, he would work at something else until he had accumulated a little stake and could once more return to the labor that was to make him rich. But he grew old and feeble; the shaft progressed less rapidly than his bodily infirmities. One day the old man wrapped himself in his blanket with a stick of dynamite and touched off the fuse.

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Southern prejudices, and he made an unprovoked attack upon a negro porter, who was sweeping the floor. In self-defense the porter, a man of good character, struck Hunter over the head with a beer bottle. The injury was not considered serious, and little attention was paid to it until the next day, toward the end of which Hunter died of concussion of the brain.

The negro was tried for murder, but his employers stood loyally by him, and his counsel made a shrewd speech picturing the defendant as fleeing from the South to escape race prejudice and taking refuge under the folds of the British flag. The jury quickly brought in a verdict of not guilty. Some of Hunter's friends were bitterly indignant. One of them offered the negro five dollars a day to cook for his outfit of packers, but the colored man was foxy enough to decline the job.

The traveler in the wilderness comes to realize that there is something wonderfully attractive in the wild, free life of the trapper and prospector, but he also catches glimpses now and then of the reverse of the shield. The genuine member of the brotherhood usually has no home ties—only friends. Friends die or drift away as the years glide by, and as the infirmities of age creep upon him he is likely to feel the loneliness of his life. Not infrequently he becomes a pathetic figure, unable longer to make a grubstake and dependent on charity for food and a home. Yet here and there a man remains hale and hearty despite his years, and I have heard of men of eighty who still hunted for golden sands in summer and followed the fur trail in winter and waited in their cabins in the woods for the final summons. At first thought such an end, alone without the soothing hand of wife or child, may seem most tragic, but, after all,

what does it matter? What death could be more sublime than one alone with God? What tomb more restful than a lonely grave among the eternal hills?

For a million years the mountains have looked down upon the pettiness of man, and though their sides are scarred by frost and wind and avalanche, they will look down for a million more. In their presence one can glimpse deeper than elsewhere into eternal verities and better realize the immensity of the unknowable universe.

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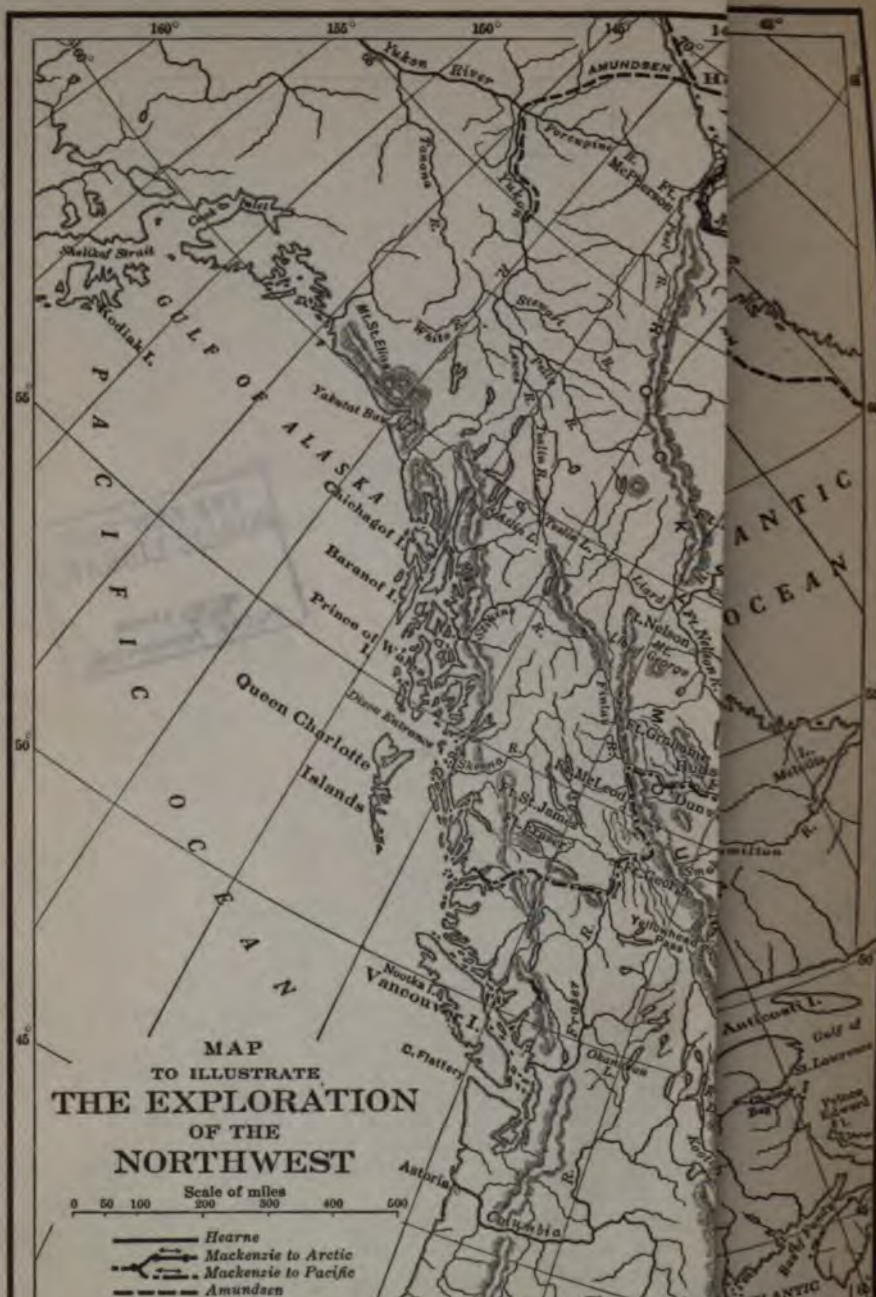
MAP
TO ILLUSTRATE
THE EXPLORATION
OF THE
NORTHWEST
Scale of miles
0 50 100 200 300 400 500
Hearne
Mackenzie to Arctic
Mackenzie to Pacific
Amundsen
WILLIAMS ENGRAVING CO. N.Y.
160° 155° 150° 145°
130° 125° 120° 115°
55° 50° 45°
Yukon River
AMUNDSEN
Porcupine R.
Ft. McPherson
Tanana R.
Yukon R.
Shelikof Strait
Kodiak I.
Cook Inlet
Mt. St. Elias
White R.
Stewart R.
Pelly R.
Lewes R.
Yakutat Bay
GULF OF ALASKA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Chichagof I.
Baranof I.
Prince of Wales I.
Queen Charlotte Islands
Dixon Entrance
Skeena R.
Ft. McLeod
Ft. St. James
Teslin L.
Liard R.
Ft. Nelson
Ft. Nelson R.
Mt. George
Finlay R.
Ft. Graham
Fraser
Ft. George
Yellowhead Pass
Nootka I.
Vancouver I.
C. Flattery
Okanagan L.
Astoria
Columbia
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Anticosti I.
Gulf of St. Lawrence
Prince Edward I.
ATLANTIC OCEAN

A LIST OF BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

The literature of Northwestern exploration and adventure is a vast one, and this bibliography does not purport to be in any sense exhaustive. It is merely a list of those books which the general reader would be likely to find most interesting. The hunter, the naturalist, the lover of wild places will find in these books the doorway to many hours of fascinating enjoyment.

Amundsen, Roald, *The Northwest Passage* (New York, 1908), a charming book by one of the greatest explorers of all time.

Burpee, Lawrence J., *Among the Canadian Alps* (London, 1914), a beautifully illustrated book which should be read by every one interested in the Canadian Rockies.

Butler, William, *The Great Lone Land* (London, 1872), the author, an army officer, helped to put down the first Riel rebellion and then made a winter journey across the plains to the foothills of the Rockies and back to the Red River region; he had a gift for writing and his book is well worth reading.

Butler, William, *The Wild Northland* (London, 1874), describes in vivid language the incidents of a trip across the continent by way of the Great Plains, Peace River, and the Omineca.

Cameron, Agnes D., *The New North* (New York, 1909), describes a trip by steamer down the Mackenzie to its mouth and up Peace River through the plains country.

Franklin, John, *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of The Polar Sea in the Years 1819, 20, 21, and 22* (London, 1823), contains the tragic story of "Franklin's First Voyage."

Hanbury, David T., *Sport and Travel in the Northland of*

Canada (New York, 1904), written by one of the most resourceful of sub-arctic travelers.

Haworth, Paul L., *On the Headwaters of Peace River* (New York, 1917), an account of a thousand-mile canoe trip to an unexplored range of the Canadian Rockies. In 1919 the author pushed still further into the region and later described his experiences in an article entitled "To the Quadacha Country and Mt. Lloyd George," in *Scribner's Magazine* for June, 1920.

Hearne, Samuel, *A Journal from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean* (London, 1795), a classic work that every one interested in adventure should read. A new edition, edited by J. B. Tyrrell, was published at Toronto in 1911 by the Champlain Society.

Hornaday, William T., *Camp-Fires in the Canadian Rockies* (New York, 1906), an extremely interesting and splendidly illustrated book by one of the greatest faunal naturalists of our time.

Laut, Agnes C., *Pathfinders of the West* (Toronto, 1904), an historical work which deals with the early period of exploration in Canada and our own Northwest.

Laut, Agnes C., *Conquest of the Great Northwest* (2 vols., New York, 1908), deals mainly with the romantic history of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Mackenzie, Alexander, *Voyages* (2 vols., London, 1802), describes the explorer's celebrated journeys to the Arctic and the Pacific.

Milton, Viscount, and W. B. Cheadle, *The Northwest Passage by Land* (London, 1865), a well-written account of a journey across the Plains and through the Rockies by way of the Yellowhead Pass in the years 1862 and 1863.

Pike, Warburton, *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada* (New ed., New York, 1917), in some respects the most fascinating book that has been written about adventure in the Northwest.

Pike, Warburton, *Through the Sub-Arctic Forest* (New York, 1896), an interesting book, though hardly so good as that describing his experiences in the Barren Ground.

Seton, Ernest Thompson, *The Arctic Prairies* (New York, 1911), describes a summer trip to the Barren Grounds and contains many interesting observations on natural history.

Southesk, Earl of, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains . . . in 1859 and 1860* (Edinburgh, 1875), the author crossed the great plains and penetrated some distance into the Rockies.

Sheldon, Charles, *The Wilderness of the Upper Yukon* (New York, 1911), the author made a study of the various species of mountain sheep in the Yukon country, and the story of his experiences makes one of the best hunting books that has ever been written.

Sheldon, Charles, *The Wilderness of the Pacific Coast Islands* (New York, 1912), narrates the author's experiences hunting bears and other big game in the region mentioned in the title.

Tyrrell, J. W., *Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada* (Toronto, 1897), describes the incidents of a canoe trip from Lake Athabasca to Chesterfield Inlet and up the west coast of Hudson Bay.

Wilcox, Walter D., *The Rockies of Canada* (New York, 1900), a revised and enlarged edition of the same author's *Camping in the Canadian Rockies.*

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